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Drama/Theatre Education for Democracy:

The Role of *Aesthetic Communities*

by

Chryso Charalambous

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Education

University of Warwick, Institute of Education, November 2012

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I would like to thank my family for their patience and tolerance all this time.

Declaration of Publications

Material addressed in chapter 1.5 was used in the following article:

Charalambous, C. (2011) '*Aesthetic Communities: Towards the flourish of democratic possibilities?*', *Education and Theatre*, (Greek Journal) No. 12, pp.8-14

This was written during the period of my Doctoral study. This thesis has not been submitted for a degree at another university.

Abstract

This research project focuses on the body and examines drama/theatre education as a site where politics and aesthetics can be brought together to promote democracy. Specifically, I explore the possibility of forming a way of doing within drama/theatre educational contexts that might influence a way of coming to understand - and potentially in its turn - a way of being. I am especially concerned with democracy as a living practice and I investigate whether students, through an aesthetic communicative nexus that they are encouraged to form within the drama class, and through their artistic actions within that nexus, can explore the possibilities of being 'political bodies', meaning the extent to which this allows democratic possibilities to flourish.

I see democracy as conditioned by aesthetics and I focus on the power of the aesthetic to distance us from our ordinariness and everydayness and qualify us with a sensibility with which to reflect and think on our ideas and actions. I seek to promote the idea of a democratic culture and the formation of the democratic self that can create and sustain a culture of democracy.

In terms of methodology, this project follows action research and an arts-infused methodology. Four groups participated in this research project. The analysis of the data collected from the fieldwork provides information to illustrate the beginnings of a pedagogy that aims to put these ideas into practice.

Introduction

‘The decisive difference between the ‘infinite impossibilities’ on which the reality of our earthly life rests and the miraculous character inherent in those events which establish historical reality is that, in the realm of human affairs, we know the author of the ‘miracles’. It is men who perform them-men who because they have received the twofold gift of freedom and action can establish a reality of their own’.

(Arendt, 1968, p.171)

In this project I follow Hannah Arendt’s ideas that humans are given the gift of making their own lives and the accompanying responsibility to use their freedom to act and make their lives worthwhile. Education, as Wiens and Coulter explain prepares us to accept this responsibility, it ‘makes it possible for us to live well and to live well with others’ (2008, p. 298). Talking specifically from within the field of drama/theatre education I explore how the specific art form can provide the context and conditions in which freedom and action can be learned and pursued in order to promote democracy. I talk of democracy and not citizenship as I would like to focus on democracy in every aspect of our lives and not just on the citizen; and I will argue for the need to develop a culture of democracy through drama/theatre education.

Drama/Theatre Education and Democracy

In a thesis that seeks to be more descriptive rather than prescriptive, I seek to explore ways to enhance agency within the frame of drama/theatre education. Henry Giroux talks of agency as central to the possibility of democratic life (2011). In my understanding, democracy has come to represent a lens through which we see the present and construct the future. Talking about democracy we are also talking about freedom, human rights, equality, justice.

Bringing the focus back to education, my aim is to commission the body within the context of drama/theatre education to engage students in micro-politics and touch upon important issues that societies face today. My interest is to examine the possibility of forming *a way of doing* within drama/theatre educational contexts that might influence *a way of coming to understand* and potentially in turn *a way of being*. I am especially concerned with democracy as a living practice and I seek to investigate whether students through an aesthetic communicative nexus that they are encouraged to form within the drama class, and their artistic actions within that nexus, can explore the possibilities of being 'political bodies'; and the extent to which this allows democratic possibilities to flourish.

I think of democracy as an ontology and I see a potential in theatre to cultivate dispositions and set in motion powers to help students see themselves each as a presence and not as merely existing, a presence that 'can reflect upon itself, that knows itself as presence that can intervene, can transform, can speak of what it does, but that can also take stock of, compare,

evaluate, give value to, decide, break with and dream' (Freire, 1998a, pp.25-26).

I want to add that the focus on democracy in this study conjoins with the current development in Cyprus of New Curricula at all levels of education. The New Curricula for the Greek-Cypriot schools follow the wider effort of other European countries 'to prepare young people for active and creative participation in social, political, cultural and economic life' respecting at the same time the particularities that defined the country's course namely 'colonialism, patron independence, coup, military invasion, occupation and mass refugeeism' (New Curricula, 2010, p.5) (author's translation). In this context the New Curricula aim to promote the active participation of young people in labour, politics, economy and culture; their involvement in the creation of knowledge; and their lives in conditions of freedom, democracy, well-being and social justice. As such they aim to achieve a form of democratic and humanistic schooling suitable for the 21st century (New Curricula, 2010) (author's translation). This research project is an exploration of how drama/theatre education can contribute to such an effort and follows Nussbaum's ideas that democracies need the humanities in order to thrive (2009, 2010).

This research project follows an action research inquiry, emanating from critical theory. Kemmis and McTaggart define action research through three foci for observation and possible transformation. These are: practices, understandings and situations (cited in Kemmis 2008). Transforming practices thus, as Kemmis puts it, means also changing the understanding or habitus of those that participate in a practice and transforming the field or situation that

the practices happen in. Respectively this presupposes a view of the self as situated and located and of identities as fluid and dynamic that are continually re-constructed through cultural-discursive, social and material-economic interactions (Kemmis, 2008, p.126).

Following Kemmis, I see drama/theatre education as a new field of action for the actors who enter it, where the aesthetic engagement and the aesthetic experiences within that field could enlarge the scope of lived experience. An understanding of the role that the body might play in this is necessary and might enable us to centre on aesthetic experience as a way of sharpening sensibility and expanding awareness; and to appreciate the relationship of this to the promotion or further development of agency.

It is important at this stage to explain how the body is approached in this study and then refer to the specific arrangements that I propose within drama/theatre education that might relate to the development and sustainability of the agent, of the democratic personality or of what I call the 'political body'.

Body and Learning: *Imagining Bodies*

The body's relationship to learning has been approached in a variety of ways. Scholars who have dwelled on the theme have talked about technique (Laban, 1975), craft (Marchand, 2008) intuition and learning (Freiler, 2008), some have focused on how movement makes the body an expressive instrument (Lowndes 1970, Jordan, 1972) while others do not find the place of

the body in learning educationally significant at all (Barrow, 2008). In applied forms of drama and theatre, the importance of the body to learning has been recognised (Nicholson, 2005, Thompson, 2003) and the same is true for drama and theatre education (Franks, 1996, Saxton in Brauer, 2002, Schewe, 2002, Wagner, 2002, Winston and Tandy, 2001). The 'bodily' focus in this study centres upon the close relationship of the body with learning and informs a pedagogy that not only incorporates the body in learning but centres around it as an essential entity where our actions could influence our futures.

Merleau-Ponty's thoughts on the creativity of the body and on embodiment and its role in perception will be the starting point for an (other) understanding of the body. By attacking both behaviorism (that sees the experience of the body as resulting from causal mechanisms) and intellectualism (that alleges that every experience of the body is controlled by the mind) he suggests instead the need to see the body as phenomenal, as lived. The above strands of thought view the body as either subject or object; the phenomenal body, on the other hand, is both a subject and an object (Steeves, 2004).

To focus on these ideas - on the creative power of embodiment and his insistence that we view the body as lived, as experienced - leads us also to thinking of imagination as embodied (Steeves, 2004). For Merleau-Ponty 'every mode of existence... consists of an imaginative dimension where new possibilities can be articulated and by which a particular situation can become a world of human possibility' (ibid, p. 3). This means that, through imagining, the habitual embodiments can be adapted to new ways of seeing the world. In the moments of imagining, the imagining body can escape the actual world

and offer new possibilities of existence. The virtual body, a formulation that he developed to denote 'a body that a person can imagine assuming and from which he can view the world from a different perspective' (p.7) is helpful in understanding this idea of extending our habitual behaviour to new uses of one's body. The virtual body is 'an embodied mode of the imagination' (p.23).

The *aesthetic* and *bodily* turn

This approach of the imagining body and the body as lived, as both being and having a body is important in the sense that it connects the body in a deeper way to the art form of drama/theatre and its potential in what relates to the formation of identities. It does so by taking as its starting point the body's role in constituting experience and the centrality of embodied experience within drama/theatre educational contexts.

It is also important as it follows an aesthetic turn in the field of drama/theatre education. As Winston and Haseman write, the emergence of a renewed interest in the significance of aesthetics, beauty and affect in the field of drama/theatre education is manifest (2010). This study joins with this interest and sees democracy as also having its aesthetic aspect, where democracy is experienced through the aesthetic mode.

Abbs claims that an aesthetic response embodies a unique kind of knowledge (Abbs, 1994, p. 43). For him, the arts work 'in and through the aesthetic' and they are inherently cognitive and educational (p.45). On this idea I have based my idea of the *aesthetic community* where I examine

students' aesthetic responses within a series of drama workshops in order to see whether they allow the students to bond in small groups and take some responsibility for their own learning. This is relevant to what Dewey called the 'miniature community' that he hoped to see in each classroom convinced of the necessity for cooperation and community support to release individual powers (1959 cited in Greene, 2003, p. 92).

Shepherd has written of the contemporary interest in the body in the field of performance and theatre studies. He sees feminism and its impact as one of the main reasons for a turn on the body where, through feminist performance, 'the body of woman was used and shown in a way that stressed its actuality as against the cultural and social meanings imposed upon it'. The feminist affect turned the body into a basic topic both politically and theoretically (2006, p. 2). Related to feminism's affect was the emergence of body art itself. In theatre this meant a centering of the focus on the actor instead of the director or the author's text; and a vision of performance as a place to experience liberation from the constraints of the body in everyday life. Shepherd also refers to how the assumed separation of the mind from the body has been challenged (2006) and Carson discusses how the body has become the locus of a great deal of theorizing where writers such as Derrida and Foucault have challenged the traditional Cartesian dualism which places the body in a lower order than the mind. For these writers, the body is the object through which power relations are both formulated and resisted, (Carson, 2001) a perspective that became significant in the analysis of my fieldwork.

Zarrilli stresses that the paradigmatic shift in thinking about the body's role in the constitution of experience happened after the appearance of the seminal work of Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. He is worth quoting here at length:

'Merleau-Ponty challenged the Cartesian cogito and asserted the primacy of the lived experience in the constitution of meaning. This phenomenology eloquently (re)claimed the centrality of the body and embodied experience as the locus for 'experience as it is lived in a deepening awareness' (Levine, 1985:62) He rejected the exclusive assumption of the natural sciences and modern psychology that treated the body as a thing, object, instrument, or machine under the command and control of an all-knowing mind' (1995, p. 13).

This project also makes a *corporeal turn* in Tambornino's phrase (2002). Tambornino talks about philosophers and political theorists that have called for an attention to the body whilst stressing those aspects that emphasize language, belief and symbolic systems. He rather attempts a corporeal turn that explores the role of affect, disposition and disciplinary practices, what he calls *tactics of the self* (2002, p.2). My own approach seeks to take this *corporeal turn* by focusing on an understanding of habitus, one that differs from the usual use of the term. For me, drama/theatre education is *a field* to use the Bourdinean notion (1984) wherein a different marking of the body, one that is gentle and more subtle, can happen. This is an argument made by applied theatre theorist and practitioner, James Thompson (2003). By playing and participating in activities in the drama classrooms we come to

experience actions different from the narrow and stereotypical; this kind of participation can extend and transform our channels of experience and leave, according to Thompson, traces on our bodies (2003, p. 60).

Structure of the thesis

The first chapter of my thesis, the Review of the Literature, is comprised of six sub-chapters. In these I spell out all the theoretical ideas that have formed the basis of my argument.

The chapter on *The Politics of the Body* analyzes how geographies and histories are imprinted on the body and condition the making and remaking of bodies in societies. I use influential theories such as those of Butler on performativity and gender, Foucault on discipline and the body, and Bourdieu on habitus and hexis in order to explain processes through which the bodies constitute the world of everyday life.

In *The Poetics of the Body*, I examine different modes of being and practices in theatre through the work of major figures such as Grotowski and Barba and I trace the relation that their ideas might have for drama/theatre education.

In *Between Aesthetics and Politics*, I grapple with the concept of democracy and provide definitions as to how the term is used in this study and support for critical pedagogy as a way to realize democracy in everyday classrooms. I also deal with democracy as saturated by the aesthetic, which leads into the next chapter, entitled *Living Critical Pedagogy through Drama Education*, where I deal with the important role that drama/theatre education can play in promoting democracy. I talk of drama/theatre's democratic

attributes and I explore the promise of drama/theatre in living critical pedagogy. I refer further to its promise for utopian enactments, the experience of freedom and of drama/theatre as engaged pedagogy, engaging through the aesthetic.

The next two chapters constitute the essence of my argument, as in these I theorize more specifically the form that the research project took. In *Aesthetic Communities* I expand on the idea of an aesthetic communicative nexus that the participants are encouraged to form and the artistic actions within that nexus as potentially affecting our becomings. Then, in the 'Political Body: An Identity through Theatre' I address how democratic culture can be promoted within the context of drama/theatre. Here I specifically focus on identity development as necessary for the constitution of a democratic self that can create and sustain a culture of democracy.

In the next chapter, *Methodological Considerations*, I refer to the epistemological grounds of this research and specifically to critical theory as that from which emanates the methodology of action research and arts-infused methodology. I then explain the strategies I used for collecting the data and to issues of validity, reliability and ethics. This chapter ends with an explanation of the specific methodology I chose for the analysis of the data and a detailed description of my own research design.

I begin the third chapter, *Readings of the Data*, with my choice on the way of presenting the data which is a storytelling approach told in the mode of flashbacks and then to analyze specific moments of the fieldwork, theorizing them and drawing connections with the ideas developed in the literature

review. The thesis culminates with a short afterthought, where I engage reflexively in readings of my own interpretation of the data; and with a conclusion where I give some final thoughts on the research project, its achievements and limitations, and the further areas of research it points towards.

Chapter 1: Review of the Literature

1.1 The Politics of the Body

This chapter consists of a collection of my readings of some influential theories from scholars that have dealt in their work with issues concerning the body. The politics of the body as a term implies the idea of the body seen as a material entity formed in social and cultural history. Specifically then, I will grapple with theories such as Judith Butler's work on performativity and gender, on Pierre Bourdieu's theory of habitus and hexis and on Michel Foucault's formulation of docile bodies and examine how they refer in different ways to structures of formation that belong to a social or symbolic order. I have chosen to present these ideas with the aim to do more than present theories that cluster around the body and its constitution in societies. Looking at the body through sociological, philosophical and politico-historical lenses, I do not aim at showing how the body is oppressed but to provide explanations as to how the self is conditioned, as any attempt to move further from any structures must of necessity understand the structures themselves.

1.1.1 The Constitution of Bodies

The corporeal self and its presentation in its environments has political connotations as in Butler's view material bodies are not only biological beings but also social, cultural and thinking beings and the presence, co-presence and action of bodies create histories and geographies (Butler cited in Franks, 1996).

The fields of feminism and cultural politics have been occupied mostly with the study of the body based on the issues of gender and race. Butler's theory on the performativity of gender is an example. The human body 'as an intentionally organized materiality', 'is always an embodying of possibilities both conditioned and circumscribed by historical convention' argues Butler (1988, p.156) raising questions about identity and questioning the extent to which we can assume that an individual can constitute himself or herself. In a culture where it is impossible to be 'without gender' (Salih, 2004, p.21), it is the very act of performing gender that indicates who we are. Through the body, we actively embody particular cultural and historical possibilities and thus the body becomes either his body or her body and then it is only known through its gendered appearance (Butler, 1988).

Gender is not a natural thing, it happens through the way one 'does' the body (Salih, 2004, p.21), and it is a construction that is constituted continuously. Therefore being is constituted by the deeds and acts of the individual. The deeds and acts of the body are 'performative' according to Butler (1988), meaning that they have the element of simulation in their presentation. They are not seen as something natural but rather as something artificial.

On the same basis she argues that acts are 'a shared experience and a collective action' (Butler, 1988, p.160). Because of the fact that there are cultural expectations as to how a gendered body will act, one does it according to particular sanctions and proscriptions. Performing gender wrongly can lead to exclusion or subjection to punishments not always direct

or evident and this suggests that how one does gender is not a matter that is handled solely by the person himself/herself.

For Butler, gender identity is proscribed and performative; all the possibilities of what the body will become exist prior to the body itself and the way one acts resembles the way the actor sustains a performance in front of the audience, because of the very fact that gender is 'a project that has cultural survival as its ends' (Butler, 1988, p.156). The dangers of marginalization, of any kind or penalisation, therefore, operate as normative patterns that direct us as to how we present ourselves in our surroundings in everyday life.

Pierre Bourdieu is also concerned with the culturally learnt control of the body. Through his elaboration on the concept of habitus, he talks of the practices that make up social life and thus social reproduction. The practices of the body are not formed by an individual decision-making process according to the theory of habitus. Habitus is explained as 'systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures' (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72). Habitus as systems of dispositions operate within the objective structures of a society which is able to produce and reproduce them. Those systems are not understandable as obedience to rules and that is why it is very difficult to effect a change in habitus.

Habitus is a product of history and creates more history (Bourdieu, 1977). In the theory of habitus, the body has a central role not only because habitus exists in people's minds, but also because it only exists through and because of the practices of actors, how they walk, talk, move or make things

in their environments (Jenkins, 1992). The embodiment of habitus is suggested and explained further by Bourdieu through the term 'hexis'. 'Bodily hexis is political mythology realised, em-bodied, turned into a permanent disposition, a durable matter of standing, speaking and thereby of feeling and believing' (Jenkins, 1992, p.75). The principles that are embodied in this way are not consciously embodied; the person does not always acknowledge their existence. The body functions as a mnemonic device on which those cultural structures of the habitus are imprinted either through a socializing or a learning process during early childhood (Jenkins, 1992). In other words, because those structures are implanted very early in the life of a person, they are performed in a natural way and for this reason the person himself/herself is not conscious of their use.

'Hexis' forms bodies that are pre-determined in the sense that learned habits, and somatic behaviours are incorporated into the body, without the self recognizing this as a process of acting or behaving in specific manners. Particular ways of acting, reacting and interacting in everyday life contexts, happen almost automatically, what feels (but is not) 'natural' as the self remains ignorant of those complex networks of dispositions.

In *The Logic of Practice*, Bourdieu discusses social fields like games in themselves, in which one does not enter the game by a conscious act but rather one is born *in the game with the game*. The condition of entry that every field tacitly imposes is practical faith explained as a 'quasi-bodily involvement' in the world, as a state of the body and not a state of the mind (1984, p.87). 'Practical sense, social necessity turned into nature, converted into motor schemes and body automatisms, is what causes practices' (ibid). In

other words, practices presuppose belief where belief is produced by habitus (Butler, 1999). The action then is not determined causally. The bodily action appears as incorporated memory. Habitus generates the dispositions but the field exercises the demands of habitus which explains the persistence of the status quo, since field is thought as pre-existing.

In an overall statement Butler points out that 'habitus does not primarily 'encounter' the field as an external or objective field' and that 'the field could not be reconstituted without the participatory and generative *doxa* of the habitus' (Butler, 1999, p. 36).

Michel Foucault's theories in turn, expand on the individual and social control of the body. He speaks of 'technologies' as the different ways in our culture that humans know about themselves (Foucault cited in Banks, 2006). Race like gender and sexuality can be read as technology argues Banks (2006).

The discourse on the practices and policies that regulate the human body complements the following theory by Foucault. In human history, power relations have imposed themselves on the body. 'They invest it, mark it, train it, torture it, force it to carry out tasks, to perform ceremonies, to emit signs' (Foucault, 1979, p. 100). The body is invested with power relations when it is seen as a force of production. But for the body to be a useful force, it needs something more than being productive. It needs to be a *subjected* body as well (Foucault, 1977). Subjection can be achieved by the forces of violence or ideology but it can be achieved by other more elusive means. It can be exercised on the body as a strategy, whose 'effects of domination are

attributed' to 'dispositions, manoeuvres, tactics, techniques, functionings' (Foucault, 1977, p.101).

This, effectively, is how power 'happens' in schools. It is produced by a series of tactics, first with the technical organization of the school and then with the conventions that are assigned and applied in the classrooms or the whole school environment. The timetable that crams more and more activity into a day, the uniforms that all students must wear, the position of the teacher as the possessor of knowledge, the technical formation of the classes - the desks organized in lines and each pupil facing the back of a classmate and the front of a blackboard, everyone in their own place. The applied rules of the class - raising hands, sitting properly - are functions of the world of the school and the power that is exercised upon the body by schooling. The mechanisms of constraint, obligation and prohibition are related to the admission that knowledge does not necessarily develop only when power relations are suspended but that power produces knowledge and that 'power and knowledge directly imply one another' (Foucault, 1989, p.101).

The school can then function as a mechanism that enforces discipline. For Michel Foucault, disciplines throughout human history have constituted 'methods which made possible the meticulous control of the operations of the body, which assured a constant subjection of its forces and imposed upon them a relation of docility-utility' (1979, p.103). The historical moment of the disciplines was the moment when this system was arranged; the more obedient the body is, the more useful it becomes and vice versa (Foucault, 1979, p.104). The manipulations of the elements of the body, its gestures and

its behaviours, produce bodies that are both subjected and practised, 'docile bodies' (ibid, p.104).

'Docile bodies' are produced and reproduced in school environments, in the sense that, the capacities and forces of the body are increased, the productiveness and usefulness of the bodies are maximized in economic terms, but the same potentials or strengths are decreased in political terms, the power that this might bring is minimized and applied to strict subjection (Foucault, 1979). 'Docile bodies' are bodies that are subjugated to the forces of others, not the forces of the body itself, with whatever negative results this brings.

1.1.2 Reflections

Reflecting on the above theories, we can conclude that, even though the different theorists examine the body from different starting points and perspectives, they agree that the presentation of the body and thus the self and its practices are related to the specific society that the individual is part of and the education that he or she receives. Bodily practice is thus about structures and functions and the above theories help us to conceive and understand it. I have chosen these theories among many that deal with the constitution of bodies because they are very influential and because ideas such as habit, power and performance will appear later in the thesis.

These theories have been interpreted as fatalistic and despairing. For instance Butler's theories on gender as a social artifice and as performance has been attacked by Nussbaum who accuses her for holding a narrow vision of the possibilities of change and for a reading of an inertia which refuses the

fact that individuals have a kind of agency. Furthermore in relation to her ideas on the body as a social construction Nussbaum refuses the fact that culture can shape and re-shape all aspects of our bodily existence (2000).

But there are other ways for it to be taken. Concerning Foucault, for example, moving away from the popular conception of power as repressive, one can read from Foucault's work on the body throughout his writings that what he aims is 'to problematize the commonly-held liberal understanding of the 'subject' as autonomous, unique, self-transparent and naturally occurring' (Sullivan, 2012, p.106).

Looking at power in positive terms means straying from the view of the subject as autonomous that has been brainwashed by ideology. Power has affected the body throughout human history and continues to affect it as there is nothing more physical and corporeal as the exercise of power (Foucault 1980 in Sullivan, 2011). Power is effective on the body as it produces effects on the level of desire and knowledge. As he appealingly puts it:

'the exercise of power... is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; ...it is ...always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of action. A set of actions upon other actions' (Foucault 1982 cited in Sullivan, 2011, p. 110)

The subject then 'cannot exist outside of power relations since bodily un(becoming) is an effect of power/knowledge' (Sullivan, 2011, p. 110) and

the lesson from Foucault should be that becoming or unbecoming starts from the body and works at the visceral level to open or block bodily possibilities.

Drama/theatre education could provide the context, I argue, for differentiation. In a recent very interesting study, Helen Cahill takes Foucault's theory on the technologies of the self and governmentality as her starting point to explain how drama conventions can function as technologies of the self and become the means that help us work on the level of the 'self'. I have made mention earlier of technologies, a term that Foucault uses to talk of the different ways in our culture that humans know about themselves. Technologies are of four kinds; technologies of production, technologies of sign systems, technologies of power and technologies of the self. As Cahill explains it, 'governmentality' for Foucault is what results from the interaction between the 'technologies of the self', the ways that individuals know, shape and control the self and 'technologies of power' that is of domination over others. Governmentality comes to be seen as the way that subjects themselves affect their own governance through shape and control and the way they are shaped and controlled externally by surveillance, control and reinforcement (2012, p.408). Cahill shows how drama conventions can function as 'technologies of the self' that govern knowledge of the self and affect identity development.

Bourdieu for his part makes strong claims on social reproduction and the habitual actions that lead to it. Habitus as *embodied history* is conceived and accepted as nature and not as history and is responsible for how one relates to the future and thus how one relates and acts to the present. Because this happens from early childhood, it makes it understandable why it

is so hard to achieve change. However, Bourdieu himself does not deny the possibility of change even if it will rarely happen (Osterlind, 2008).

Osterlind, for example, has shown how Theatre of the Oppressed appears promising in making social structures, power relations and individual habitus visible and in providing the means for change (ibid). In a similar way, I will expand in chapters to follow how the aesthetic experience within the drama class could help to expand habitus. The issue of power and knowledge of the self will also be points to consider.

I should add a last point in relation to Butler's theory of the performative. Nussbaum has judged in a strict manner Butler's work accusing her of quietism in the sense that her theories do not urge towards organized public action but counsel for subversion in a weak way, that of engaging in parodic performances. Nussbaum insists that subversion shouldn't be in just any direction. Rather, in her view there should be normative patterns that this subversion should rest on, bringing as an example dignity and fairness (Nussbaum, 2000). Although I am sympathetic to both views, I believe that Butler's performative acts, understood as those acts that bring to life that which they name, is promising in the sense that they allow for a view of identity not as *being* but as *doing* and thus as *becoming* (Butler, 1993).

In relation to this work, in the primary drama classrooms that I would be working in, the challenge has not been to work on the level of organized public action in Nussbaum's terms. Rather the concern was to work on the personal level, that of fantasizing, of inventing possibilities. In drama/theatre education we will be concerned with change on the personal level where resistance takes another meaning. It is about 'disrupting knowledge and a

subsequent refashioning of meaning'. Change in Butler's view is contingent upon this kind of disruption of settled knowledge, which is possible through fantasy (Cahill, 2012, p.140). In this case, parody can be a helpful learning practice. This is something I will engage with again in more practical terms later in this study.

What I have attempted to do in this section was to present influential theories that theorize on the way bodies are formed in everyday life. In the next section I will look at the different use of the body in drama/theatre and stress the conscious and signifying presence in the drama worlds and explain how this relates to the wider aims of this study.

1.2 The Poetics of the Body

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage. A man walks across this empty space whilst someone else is watching him and this is all that is needed for an act of theatre to be engaged'

(Brook, 1990, p.11)

Brook's famous connotation captures in its essence that the human presence is what is necessary to do theatre. This chapter will focus on the human presence, on the body as perhaps the most significant element in theatre. 'The first word of the theatrical vocabulary is the human body' as Boal puts it (1985 cited in Auslander, 1997, p.99) and in this section I will refer to scholars that have followed this line and written on the importance of the body in the theatre and on the very different use of the body in theatre from that of everyday life. I will also define the relationship of the above to drama/theatre education along with its correlations to this specific project.

1.2.1 Theatre: An art of bodies

Simon Shepherd places great value on the body by referring to theatre as an art of bodies, wherein theatre is a medium in which one group of bodies watches another group of bodies. 'Theatre is and has always been a place that exhibits what a human body is, what it does and what it is capable of' (2006, p.1).

Through his Poor Theatre, Grotowski was another theatre master who centered on human presence as the most essential element of theatre. Characteristically he said that 'by gradually eliminating whatever proved superfluous, we found that theatre can exist without make-up, without autonomic costume and scenography, without a separate performance area (stage), without lightning and sound effects, etc. It cannot exist without the actor-spectator relationship of perceptual, direct, 'live' communion'. By accepting this poverty of theatre, where all that is not necessary is removed, Grotowski focused on what he considered the backbone of the medium (1967, p.62).

For Boal it was not possible to imagine a play or even a scene without the presence of a human being. Theatre is essentially the human being and the human being is essentially a body that is *sensitive, emotive, rational, it has a sex and can move* (Boal, 1995).

1.2.2 The Body in Theatre

Different scholars have studied the theatrical way of being. The choice of the theories and ideas has not been random. Rather it is causal and I will refer further to the ways that these theories connect to drama/theatre education.

Eugenio Barba has written on the very different presence of the body in theatre and everyday life. In a book on Theatre Anthropology, Barba studies presence and the principles that govern what he calls the *scenic bios* of the

actor on an intercultural level through the work of great theatre personae such as Stanislavski, Meyerhold, Craig, Copeau, Brecht, Artaud and Decroux.

Barba comes to explain that the performer's physical and vocal presence in an organized performance is fixed according to principles that are different from those of daily life. He calls this extra-daily, particular use of the body, technique. In everyday life and in a performance situation, the body is used in a substantially different way; in the daily context, body technique is modeled by culture, social status and profession whereas in performance situations, different body techniques come into play. By distinguishing between the two, he talks about *daily techniques* and *extra-daily techniques* (Barba, 1995).

To be born in a particular society, in a particular era, in a specific milieu we become *incultured*. This process of *inculturation* is both mental and corporeal. The daily technique, the use of the body in daily life is absorbed without choice. Daily technique, the result of *inculturation* is the unconscious adaptation of stereotypical, automatic behavior. In theatre, though, a method must be invented to break this process of *inculturation*. All theatrical traditions both occidental and oriental have produced ways and processes to *de-culture* the actor in the sense of inventing extra-daily techniques to substitute for the daily. Barba calls this specialization in a particular technique *acculturation*, which is colonization imposed from the outside (Barba, 1988).

To move then from daily behaviour to the extra-daily behaviour which is the case in performance is not about freeing oneself from conditioning but about conditioning in a different way. Indicative examples are the Japanese

Noh and Kabuki (Barba, 1989) or the Indian Kathakali, where the performer goes through an actual reforming of the body (Schechner, 2006).

Through another route, Jerzy Grotowski speaks of technique which he considers to be the core of theatre art. He talks about negative technique, explaining that in his theatre laboratory he is not interested in teaching the actor a predetermined set of skills but to take away all that disturbs the actor; he is concerned with an eradication of blocks, with eliminating those elements in the 'natural' behavior that obscure him (1967).

Another important idea of Grotowski that is of interest here is that he refers to a liberation of the actor through negative technique but explicitly mentions that the lack of discipline, chaos, threatens the actor's work. The creative process within actors is somewhere in between discipline and spontaneity. At the same time, Grotowski speaks of the necessity to give the actor the possibility of working 'in security'. As the actor's work is constantly under continuous supervision and observation, it is essential to create an atmosphere where everything is acceptable, and whatever the actors do will be understood and accepted. In this, the actor can reveal himself (1967, p.192).

It is not, however, the scope of this chapter to examine the different techniques that have been employed for the preparation of the actor. The reason that I have been expanding on the specific theories here is because of their focus on the body. At the same time I would like to examine them in relation to this specific project that proposes an embodied form of drama/theatre education.

1.2.3 Body and Drama/Theatre education

As Winston and Tandy argue, good class teachers and good dramatists work along the same principles (2001). I agree very much with the above thought. Professional theatre and drama/theatre education must walk in parallel in terms of the principles that guide their work and not the works themselves. Thinking through this idea, it is essential to move further in analyzing the principles that guide the work of the theatre masters that I have been referring to and how their work can inform what this project proposes.

In the first place, Barba's ideas can be very influential especially because even though he has developed a very personal way of working with actors, his ideas are comparative and inclusive of different terrains (Fowler in Barba, 1988). He abstracts through his research and writings a very important principle that must influence drama/theatre education; that the body in theatre must not respect the habitual conditioning of the body in everyday life. Of course Barba talked about developing extra-daily techniques for training the actor which does not concern my own educational project. In drama/theatre education, I argue that we should not aim at the perfection of particular bodily practices or the acquisition of stylised techniques. A corollary of these ideas should be the development of a way of working in drama class that encourages the students to be present in an alternative way than that of every-day life; a way that deviates from the monotonous and the repetitive.

Grotowski's ideas are complementary here. Again Grotowski focused on training and even though he does not accept the idea of offering the actor a collection of skills, his actors would go under intense training that could last

for lengthy periods of time. But an important principle that guided his work must be also a starting point for drama/theatre educators; namely, that of working in such a way as to eliminate any obstacles that disturb and obscure the participants. We should aim at the eradication of any kind of obstacles that block the students from participating in drama spontaneously and the transcendence of their inhibitions that come from the social and cultural contexts they are coming from (Babbage, 2004, Boal, 2002, 2006).

Additionally, his thoughts that the actor must feel that he works 'in security' is of great significance for drama/theatre educators. As what we do in drama/theatre is always public and not private, what Grotowski proposes about creating an atmosphere where the actors feel that whatever they do will be understood and accepted must inform our pedagogies. In the same way, our students must feel secure to participate and open themselves up in the process. For this, it is important that the teacher does not ask his/her students to do what he/she is not prepared to do.

Working with the body involves issues about personal space, physical contact, and appropriate boundaries and issues about the cultural and social construction of the body and how this is experienced (Nicholson, 2005a). Every educator must attend to these issues and to Grotowski's proposal of providing some kind of discipline in the work, as a necessary discipline to structure their freedom to work and be creative is of great value.

Finally, Freire supports that educators should start from what the students already know (Freire, 1998a). In the context of drama/theatre

education the bodily memories that each of us carries can be seen as the resources we draw upon when we do drama/theatre with children. In Franks' view, dramatic texts and activities in the classroom are made of and by the students' bodies that participate in the drama (Franks, 1996). Nicholson describes drama as an embodied pedagogy. Thinking in practical terms, drama is composed by material elements, of bodies and voices in space, and the physical embodiment of knowledge and understanding is constitutive of the art form of drama (2005). Applied theatre scholar James Thompson has expanded on this coherently. Applied theatre as he writes 'does not meet the neutralized bodies of its participants but, in creating theatre, people are starting from and playing with the rich, dynamic and changing action matter that makes up their lives' (2003, p.55). What we do in drama then comes from the 'action matter' of our lives which is defined as 'a series of received 'bits of behaviour', mediated cognitive/affective responses, learnt scripts, tried and tested shrugs, practised movements, handwired outbursts and controlled performances' (ibid, p.60).

1.2.4 Towards an Embodied Drama/Theatre Education

The proposed way for these theoretical ideas to be put into practice is through play, games and imagination. I propose that the drama work we do with students should be highly *play-ful*.

I will now turn to Hungarian psychologist Csikszentmihalyi and his ideas on flow to support the above statement. Csikszentmihalyi starts from play as a liberating and rewarding activity that provides peak experiences and

intrinsic motivation in order to examine how this can be applied outside of games. Playing is characterized by *autotelic involvement* because of enjoyment. We play because we enjoy the activity for its own sake (1975).

‘People who enjoy what they are doing enter in a state of ‘flow’: They concentrate their attention on a limited stimulus field, forget personal problems, lose their sense of time and of themselves, feel competent and in control, and have a sense of harmony and union with their surroundings... Conversely a ‘flow activity’ is an activity that makes flow experiences possible’ (1975, p.182).

Flow in this sense is another word for playfulness and it is closely associated with action and opportunities for action. Thus action deprivation equals flow deprivation. For our educational spaces this means making room for free imagination, for free movement, for exploration and manipulation of the objects.

Thompson sees playing games as an action of re-making the body. If socialization is a continuous way of wounding or scarring the body, games can be a counterweight as they can stimulate the body’s senses. Bodies become atrophied in their engagement with the environment because of the repetitiveness of physical action which causes a withering of the senses (Boal in Thompson, 2006).

In the context of drama/theatre the essentially carnal nature of play allows this re-making of the body as 'marvellous and unbelievable things' can happen through game as 'it unleashes life-giving madness' as Philippe Gaulier argues (2007, p.202). Gaulier relates game to pleasure and to a desire for life. An embodied drama/theatre education should focus on playing. It should be highly play-ful because the pleasure that is attached to it that Czikszenmihalyi prefers to call enjoyment is enough to motivate action (1975).

In the chapters that follow, I will focus on these ideas and explain how I am incorporating them, both theoretically and practically, into the argument of this thesis.

1.3 Between Aesthetics and Politics

My task in this chapter is to grapple with the concept of democracy and provide some explanation about the way it is employed and approached in this study. If in Crick's sense democracy lies not in the word but in the deed - where people act and behave democratically in patterns of friendship, speech, dress and amusements and treat everyone else equally (2002) - drama/theatre education comes to be seen as a site where participants can practice democracy. Saturated by the art form's aesthetic dimension, democracy gains another meaning, that of aesthetic democracy, with drama/theatre functioning as the lever which brings aesthetics and politics together to support democracy.

1.3.1 The idea of democracy

Writing on democracy, Alain Badiou explains that despite all that is devaluing the word democracy today, it still 'remains the dominant emblem of contemporary political society' where an emblem 'is the untouchable in a symbolic system, a third rail' and before trying to apprehend the realities we live in, it is imperative that we dislodge our emblem (Badiou, 2011, p.7). Bringing forward Badiou's comment, my aim is not to dispute the fact that democracy in our minds has indeed a positive meaning or to stress the authority that the word enjoys (ibid), but to account for the necessity to decipher the word democracy in order to find its place within education.

Eric Hazan in an interview with Jacques Ranciere intriguingly entitled *Democracies against Democracy* points out that democracy does not enjoy total unquestioning support and that the one thing that all agree on is that it denotes different things (Ranciere, 2011). Democracy is an essentially contested concept, difficult to define because every definition depicts a different moral, social and political agenda (Crick, 2002). As a start, then, it is imperative to unpack the notion of democracy and reinvest the word with meaning in the context of education. Democracy for some is an ideal construct and in its ideal form it has never existed before and may never exist in the future (Kelly, 1995). Others prefer not to see it as ideal rather as a presupposition and not as a goal to attain (Hazan in Ranciere, 2011). I will rather follow this last view and opt for the view on democracy as a way of life, as democracy is not relegated to politics and is not constrained merely to the act of voting.

Democracy was approached as a way of life by John Dewey, who saw it as something more than a form of government. Rather he explained democracy as 'primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience' (Dewey, 1944, p.87). Elsewhere Dewey furthered his analysis on democracy by distinguishing between democracy as a social idea and political democracy as a system of government. In his formulation on the social idea of democracy lies his deep belief in democracy as the expression 'of free and enriching communion' (1984, p. 350). In his words:

‘From the standpoint of the individual, it consists in having a responsible share according to capacity in forming and directing the activities of the groups to which one belongs and in participating according to need in the values which the groups sustain. From the standpoint of groups, it demands liberation of the potentialities of members of a group in harmony with the interests and goods which are common. Since every individual is a member of many groups, this specification cannot be fulfilled except when different groups interact flexibly and fully in connection with other groups’ (ibid, p. 327-328).

Crucially, then, the school as institution that can support this kind of communication that the social idea of democracy commands has a major role to play.

Ranciere understands democracy ‘as the capacity to do things’. Democracy conveys a sense of ‘potentiality or enablement: the capacity of ordinary citizens to discover modes of actions for realizing common concerns’ (Ranciere in Ross, 2011, p. 89). Democracy as ‘the power of anybody to concern himself or herself with the common affairs’ is ‘a moment, at best a project rather than a form’, as the struggle for the preservation of our public lives’ (Ross, 2011, p.99).

This view of democracy as a project, a continuous effort for forming, developing and maintaining certain ways of being, orients us to focus on people. Jean-Luc Nancy relates democracy to the autonomy of the people by defining it as that which ‘promotes and promises the liberty of the whole

human being within the equality of all human beings. In this sense modern democracy does engage and absolutely and ontologically the whole human being and not just the 'citizen'. Or rather it tends to merge the two'. (2011, p. 60). His ideas on democracy refer to a mutation not in a political base but in the base of culture (ibid).

Zuidervaat's ideas of a general idea of democracy prior to its further specification (as for instance political democracy) are consonant with Nancy's. The former insists on the development of a democratic culture which is what I want also to argue for. He is also helpful in pursuing an additional discussion as to how the idea of democracy should be informed by postmodern and feminist discourses.

Following Ranciere and Zuidervaat, I want to argue that in all different theories of democracy I track a line that connects them, namely that of people that rule, or the rule of the people as the Greek translation of the word denotes (*demos* as the people and *krato* as rule). But recent postmodern and feminist critiques must be incorporated into an understanding of democracy which will inform in turn our pedagogies. What they focus on is power, and how its distribution is not confined to institutional sites but circulates in all public and private life as in family, school, knowledge (Terchek and Conte, 2001). Democracy as a project then is also modern and postmodern as it does not abandon the modern perspective of achieving equality and freedom of all the people but moves further to incorporate the postmodern perspective which is to acknowledge difference, 'the particular, the multiple and the heterogeneous' (Mouffe, 1988, p. 226). Following Mouffe, then, in later sections of this thesis I will refer further to the creation of new-subject

positions, of democratic individuals as agents, where agency will be viewed as a site where the issue of power will not be surpassed but rethought and reworked in alternative ways (Giroux, 2011).

1.3.2 Critical Pedagogy: Realizing Democracy in Everyday Classrooms

Critical pedagogy opens the way to an education for democracy as it implies a faith in democracy as a way of life (Monchinski, 2008). Critical pedagogy's close relationship to democracy is recognized by Giroux who was the first to write about it as aspiring to link schooling to democratic principles of society and social action that is transformative in the interest of oppressed communities (Darder et al., 2009). In the section that follows, critical pedagogy's most important principles that relate to democracy and to an education for democracy will be analyzed in relation to drama/theatre education.

As a start, critical pedagogy recognizes the political nature of pedagogy (Kincheloe, 2008). All pedagogies are always political whether or not they acknowledge their ideology and they are political because they are about the formation of human beings (Macrine, 2009). Echoing Dewey and Freire, Macrine makes the following comment:

“Given that education is a social experience, that all social experience is formative, and that all formative experiences embed one value system or another, it is impossible to form or shape humans in a

manner without implicating norms and orientations for thought and action which is synonym for ideology' (ibid, p.121).

In the case of critical pedagogy the value system that orients it is democracy. Critical pedagogy is ideological and it encourages human beings to become more democratic.

What is more, in this recognition of the ideological nature of pedagogy is the faith in the belief that people are not determined by their situations (Monchinski, 2008). If educators base their pedagogies on the hope that things might be different and invest in agency, then they are planting the seeds of change. Change of course will be a slow process. As Wink sees it, critical pedagogy is about 'learning, relearning and unlearning' (2005, p. 67). Unlearning is in essence the most difficult because it is about the students having to leave behind certain ideas and practices and learn new ways of thinking and acting. It is thus about predisposing students to other practices and ideas.

In relation to the recognition of its political nature is the fact that critical pedagogy is 'situated pedagogy' which is formed by and for specific themes, locations and constituencies (Shor cited in Macrine, 2009, p. 119). As Kohl explains, 'students live in a historical situation, in a social, political and economic moment. Those things have to be part of what we teach' (cited in Darder et al., 2009, p.1). Critical pedagogy, then, is context specific. It is dedicated to an understanding of the context in which it is to take place and this understanding informs the development of the practices. Maintaining a

view of the vernaculars, pedagogues, I argue, should find ways to bridge the gap between knowledge and everyday realities, between what is learnt and the actual lives of those involved in learning. Addressing real social needs is the democratic project of critical pedagogy.

It is not possible to promote any kind of change unless the wider context in which learners live is examined and critically understood. Because of this, critical pedagogy is always in a process of development. It is neither fixed nor finite (Wink, 2005). This constant evolving of critical pedagogy and its infiniteness is necessary in what concerns democracy as democracy is never a finished product, a destination that we struggle to reach. Rather democracy must be always created and recreated, strengthened or adjusted to new circumstances (Monchinski, 2008). Writing on critical pedagogy's promise in the age of globalization, Giroux refers to a *pedagogy of democratization* following Amin, who speaks of *democratization* instead of democracy to underscore the unfinished process inherent in the term (Amin 2001 cited in Giroux, 2011).

Critical pedagogy reassesses the relationship between the performative and the pedagogical. Education is not about passive reception of information. It is about learning and in relation to democracy this learning should be about experiencing democracy. Giroux talks about this intersection between the pedagogical and the performative and claims that pedagogy is understood performatively as that event where things happen in the service of learning. He stresses the need for the formation of relations in the classroom to encourage dialogue, deliberation and the power to raise questions (2011). It is a pedagogy about engaging in work that locates politics in the relations of

all those involved in learning. Elsewhere he touches in more detail on the issue of critical pedagogy as performative practice wherein, echoing Raymond Williams, he refers to its intention to make learning part of social change itself. In extending the relation between critical pedagogy and the performative he adds that the pedagogical becomes performative when they 'work together to create, perform, construct those spaces in which desire, memory, knowledge and the body reconfigure the possibility of speaking otherwise in order to act otherwise in diverse public cultures and terrains' (Giroux, p.145). Thence the pedagogical as performative leaves open the space for a constant re-working of one's identity.

Critical educators are concerned with the development of the critical consciousness of their students. One can reasonably claim that critical consciousness is something that educators must possess themselves if they are to help their students develop their own. This is often where opponents of critical pedagogy target their criticisms. As Fischman comments:

Proponents and practitioners of critical pedagogy do not need and cannot sustain their narratives based on idealized super teachers and critically super conscious Gramscian 'organic intellectuals' as the only privileged agents of change. Critical Pedagogy would greatly benefit by valuing and understanding the importance of potentially transformative characteristics that are already present in many teachers' (2009, p.210).

He refers characteristically to commitment as one potentially transformative characteristic. The same is true for students. The teachers should focus on what is a potentially transformative characteristic and one of these is 'interest' which will be analyzed in a subsequent chapter.

The development of critical consciousness involves naming, reflecting, imagining and acting with responsibility (Greene, 2009). It refers to 'the process in which men [sic], not as recipients, but as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality that shapes their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality' as Macedo points out (cited in Monchinski, 2008, p. 4). The development of a critical consciousness of the world is the basis for the potential transformation of that world (Au, 2009). The development of a critical consciousness that can lead to transformation, though, is a big project. Indeed, Freire himself, who spoke and wrote so much on the subject of conscientization, explained 'the process by which human beings participate critically in a transforming act' (1985, p. 106) as neither that which transforms reality nor is reduced to a mere reflection of reality. 'One of the important points in conscientization is to provoke recognition of the world, not as a 'given' world, but as a world dynamically 'in the making' (ibid). Elsewhere Freire himself explained that critical consciousness of reality is not tantamount to the transformation of that reality (cited in Au, 2009) and most importantly he stressed that only political action in society can lead to transformations in the social order and not critical study in classrooms alone (cited in Monchinski, 2008). In this sense, education can play a very specific role, that of preparing students for any transformation in the sense of realizing themselves as possible agents of change.

In the context of drama/theatre education, I am tempted to refer to the aesthetic in Harold Osborne's elaboration. Osborne talks of the aesthetic as an 'attitude of mind and a mode of awareness which permeates broadly throughout our mental outlook and performance' (1985, p.87), where the aesthetic posits the valuing of something for its own sake. One can imagine then that with aesthetic involvement in teaching for democracy, as with the aesthetic in other spheres, the focus goes beyond what is taught to how it is taught.

In furthering the discussion on the aesthetic and the process of realization of oneself as a possible agent of change, I will comment on the idea of 'as if' and its centrality in imagination and aesthetic experience. Vaihinger in his *Philosophy of As-If* expatiates upon the *as-if* as consisting of two parts; a comparison in which we regard something as something else and a condition, *the if*, in which something which is impossible is posited. In the conditional clause something unreal or impossible is stated and yet from this unreality or impossibility conclusions can be drawn. Despite its unreality or impossibility, the supposition we are making is still valid. By combining the *as* and the *if*, something - which could be the imaginary situation we are creating - is compared with a possible case - which could be a real-life experience (Curl, 1983).

Transformation from a certain way of thinking and acting to another is possible through the power of imagination. Imagination is 'what imports a conscious quality to experience and the realization that things do not repeat themselves. That experience should not be expected to be uniform or frictionless' (Greene, 2009, p.). Being able to imagine amounts to the ability to

detach oneself from the actual situation in which one is part and envision situations that are non-real, non-actual (Sartre in Warnock, 1978). The ability to imagine can be enriched and is enriching. As Warnock comments, 'there is always more to experience and more in what we experience that we can predict (Warnock, 1978, p.202). In releasing imagination, to use Greene's famous phrase, drama has a special role to play.

1.3.3 Aesthetic Democracy: Reconciliations

Drama/theatre pedagogy, where the pedagogical becomes performative, could be the locus where a breaking between art and politics in a micro-level could be succeeded. The democratic and shared structures and spaces of power that can be produced make the political visible through pedagogical practices that work towards making a difference in the world rather than merely to reflect that world (Giroux, 1998).

In a book on aesthetic democracy, Thomas Docherty explains democracy as episodic and rare and not constant, manifesting itself in moments and specifically in those moments where a different moment of living is possible. In this thought, Docherty upholds that democracy is conditioned by aesthetics as such (2006).

The concept of aesthetic democracy in bringing aesthetics and democracy together endorses art's political potential in the wider sense of the term, where the aesthetic experiences can orient those experiencing them towards having political experiences as well. Aesthetic experiences refer to

those in our encounters with art that are characterized by the enjoyment of the activity itself. Here aesthetic experience will be examined in relation to drama/theatre as a site where the aesthetic is in play. Drama/theatre will be seen as offering new ways of approaching democracy and we will look at how the aesthetic dimension of drama/theatre might enable participants to engage in politics in creative ways.

Aesthetic politics, as Bleiker points out, is about the potentiality of artistic engagements to challenge the way we think about and represent the political (2009). The significance of the aesthetic in the way it enables us to be political beings must be illuminated. The value of the aesthetic lies in the possibility of qualifying us with sensibility, of distancing us from our ordinariness and everydayness. Aesthetic experiencing as a poetic dimension of being lies in this sensibility that arts education can endow us with (Ross, 1984).

Bleiker's thoughts on aesthetics and politics are helpful in conceptualizing the value of the aesthetic in our engagement with politics. Bleiker insists on the need to indulge in artistic endeavours as the aesthetic engagement that they bear helps us to rethink the relationship between poetics and politics. Aesthetics for him adds significantly to our interpretative repertoire, as aesthetics refers not only to the practices of art but also and importantly, to the insights and understandings they arouse (2009).

To refer to the contribution of aesthetics he uses terms such as imagination and creativity. These aesthetic sources work as a kind of reflective understanding that comes from the cultivation of sensibility about

the political. In this sense aesthetics is neither good nor bad but works rather as an amplifier. This last thought captures the essence of the power of the aesthetic to direct us towards a different engagement with the political. As art and aesthetic sources are not regulated by habit, they help us think and reflect on our ideas, provide us with different options and with the opportunity to examine the consequences of those options (ibid).

This direct encounter with the political through the aesthetic is a key idea of the actual meaning of aesthetic democracy. Bleiker, as I have already mentioned, uses terms such as imagination and creativity to talk about aesthetics. In a parallel way Docherty talks about play as central to aesthetics. He borrows the terms play and play-drive from Schiller, and I would like to refer to them to further explain aesthetic democracy. For Schiller, play carries in its interpretation features from notions such as theatricality and childhood self-entertainment and manages to reconcile in our minds sensibility and reason. In Schiller's words '...the play-drive, therefore, would be directed towards annulling time within time, reconciling becoming with absolute being and change with identity' (1967 cited in Docherty, 2006 p. 73).

Aesthetic democracy for Docherty is based upon the potentiality of democracy. He thus employs play to talk about aesthetics and aesthetic democracy because for him play is a key pedagogical activity where things are no longer seen as determinative; where 'things become pure potentiality' (Docherty, 2006, p. 74). Playing, then, is a state where players have the power to rearrange things. Drama/theatre as an art of playing can be a privileged site where aesthetic democracy can flourish.

Heyfron has written on the value of the aesthetic in education as related to fundamental humanizing processes. His arguments have deep relevance to the above ideas in a very straightforward manner. Aesthetic engagements are valuable as they are the means by which a person becomes conscious of himself/herself as having personal worth. Through the aesthetic it is possible for people to develop autonomy as they come to care about their lives and conceive them as significant (1981). Engagements in the arts, as moments of experiencing a sense of freedom, re-attach us to our lives through envisaging preferred modes of being. The drama pedagogue can be seen as one who facilitates the process through which students embody and articulate these modes of being.

This aesthetic turn in political theory is also embodied in the work of Ranciere. I consider Ranciere's theory on the politics of the aesthetics and specifically his concept of the distribution of the sensible very significant for discussing aesthetic democracy as he focuses on the issue of power. In echoing Foucault, he sees politics as a domain of power relations that regulate what can be seen, said and thought (Bleiker, 2009). The distribution of the sensible suggests the way in which participation in a common social world is arranged by establishing possible modes of perception. Aesthetics, as Highmore writes, refers to society and culture and 'it understands actions, silences, thoughts, dreams, perceptions, enunciations, and so on, not in terms of a social content that could be judged as relatively good or bad, but rather as the production of formal arrangements and forms of sense distribution that are at heart simultaneously aesthetic and political' (2005, p.454). In this sense

aesthetics arrange the distribution of ways of perceiving and thus can produce the political.

Aesthetic acts can rearrange experience and induce novel forms of political subjectivity, as Ranciere explains (2004). This is based on a conception of democracy as 'defined by these intermittent acts of political subjectivization that reconfigure the communal distribution of the sensible' (Rockhill cited in Ranciere, 2004, p.3). This conception of democracy as based on the distribution of the sensible is of great relevance to education and specifically to arts education. As Sayers stresses, referring specifically to Ranciere's theory, a new distribution of the sensible involves more than an overcoming of social barriers that prevent excluded voices from being heard. It is primarily an issue of having also the capacity to speak so as to make oneself heard. The transformation of the distribution of the sensible entails necessarily an education of the senses if they are ever to be extended (2005). The promise, then, of Ranciere's theory is the key role of drama/theatre education - an education of the senses that can potentially lead to a change of consciousness.

In the section that follows I will focus in more detail on how aesthetics and politics come together through drama/theatre education and in what sense drama/theatre education helps not to teach but to live critical pedagogy.

1.4 Living critical pedagogy through drama/theatre education

‘One of the great services theatre can perform for the people of any country or region, or town or village is to be the instrument of authentic democracy or at the very least to push the community as near to authentic democracy as has yet been achieved’ (McGrath cited in Neelands, 2009, p. 181).

McGrath’s statement above denotes the important role that drama/theatre can play in promoting democracy, an undertaking both daring and complicated. The section that follows will deal with the way that drama/theatre education can contribute to the creation of autonomous, self-regulating and socially responsible citizens by drawing on the similarities of drama/theatre to democracy and by touching on issues like utopia, freedom, and the aesthetic and how these are connected to democracy and to an education for democracy. My argument is that drama/theatre education as an alternative kind of pedagogy, visible and embodied, could provide the space where participants form and rehearse different ways of being and acting and have the chance not to be taught critical pedagogy but to live and practice critical pedagogy.

1.4.1 Drama/theatre and its democratic attributes

To begin with, it is essential to mention what are these qualities in the nature of drama and theatre that could foster the development of democratic possibilities. Drama is a communal art form (Winston and Tandy, 2001). As

such it requires participation and co-operation to take place. The same is true for democracy. Participation and cooperation are the sine qua non of democracy. At the same time to do theatre, presence and the empty space are needed, as Peter Brook famously denotes (2005). The empty space is shared between the participants. This space is the same for everyone being present in the theatrical moment. This convention has political connotations that might serve democratic aims. Within the drama class the participants, in a shared space that belongs to everyone, can explore more democratic ways of being.

Art is not merely contemplation but is also action, and all action changes the world at least a little, as Kushner comments (cited in Nicholson, 2005). In this sense theatre has been proposed as a training ground for action (Babbage, 2004). The co-presences in the dual realities, both the fictional and the real, are political in nature as presence is relational to the world and to others (Freire, 1998). Theatre could operate as an institution in the wider sense of the term, where we can (re)present plexuses of presences, negotiating freely the 'norms of mutual recognition' as referenced in James Tully (2000, 2004).

Likewise, life and what we dissent in theatre is more anaglyphic, more vivid and therefore more visible (Brook, 2005). The direct bodily tryst that the theatrical convention provides offers possibilities for seeing ourselves seeing and observe ourselves doing in ways that potentially affect our collective beings. Regarding also John McGrath's statement that 'theatre is the most public of art forms...and as a public event it is about matters of public concern' (cited in Gallagher, 2000, p. 5), drama/theatre education might be a

forum where participants debate issues of pressing concern that affect their collective lives.

1.4.2 The promise of Drama/Theatre

I am arguing that the democratic attributes of drama and theatre are in essence the infrastructure of a vision of a drama pedagogy that promotes democracy, its values and practices. The promise of drama and theatre to open up new roads to experience and knowledge does not lie solely in the similarities that democracy and drama/theatre share; it lies also in the potency to explore the idea of democracy through multiple focuses on terrains like utopia, freedom and the aesthetic that have much to offer to an education for democracy.

1.4.2.1 Utopian enactments

Envisaging a democratic society could be characterized as utopian. There are, though, two views on utopia according to Freire. On the one, there is the view of utopia as something that cannot be attained, something unrealistic; and on the other there is a view of utopia as a possible dream. It is this last view of utopia that Freire prompts us to 'bet on' and explains that at bottom, every educational practice is directed towards a certain objective, a dream, 'an idea of utopia' (Freire 1996, cited in Monchinski, 2008, pp.12-13).

Art can embody utopia as it can annihilate the reality principle (Marcuse in Becker, 1994). The element of the fictional allows for the coeval

operation within and outside the reality principle which allows for new openings in experience and new perspectives. This subversive potential of art lies in that indispensable constituent of art, the power of imagination.

Marcuse writing on art, comments that 'Art is a location, a designated-imaginative space where freedom is experienced...But it is also a psychic location – a place in the mind where one allows for a recombination of experiences, a suspension of the rules that govern daily life, a denial of gravity. It 'challenges the established reality' by creating 'fictitious worlds' in which one can see mirrored that range of human emotion and experience that does not find an outlet in the present reality. In this sense the fabricated world becomes more real than real life (cited in Becker, 1994, p. 117). Imagination is a mode of perceiving, of understanding the world differently; it is 'what imparts a conscious quality to experience and the realization that things do not repeat themselves; that experience should not be expected to be uniform or frictionless' (Greene, 2009, p.142).

For Ricoeur, imagination has two functions; the one is to 'preserve and order' narratives and ideologies by eternalizing images and stories of the traditions of a culture or a society and the other is to have 'a disruptive function' that helps us rethink the character of our social life (cited in Nicholson, 2010, pp. 152-153). Notwithstanding both functions are important and necessary, the 'disruptive function' of imagination will be in focus here, the operation of which makes utopia possible.

Similarly, J. Valdes following Ricoeur's steps discusses the function of fiction in shaping reality through an analysis of the concept of the productive

reference. According to this idea, fictions do not refer in a 'reproductive' way to reality, namely, exhibit reality as already given, but they may refer in a 'productive' way to reality as intimated by the fiction'. In this sense, fiction both 'invents' and 'discovers' reality (1991, p.12). Transformation from a certain way of thinking and acting to another, then, is possible through the power of imagination as Valdes describes it, since imagination as a productive force can offer an expanded vision of reality.

To return to utopia I would like to refer to the work of performance theorist Jill Dolan who argues that live performance can be the place where people gather and experience and imagine the possibility of a better world. The magic place of theatre, in her words, can 'embody and even if through fantasy, enact the affective possibilities of 'doings' that gesture towards a much better world' (2005, p.6). The most important point in her argument for this study is her espousal of Bammer's idea that 'utopian' is a 'process that involves human agency'. More clearly Bammer replaces the notion of 'a utopia' as something which is fixed with that of 'utopian' as 'an approach toward', the shift from what is set to what is not yet set. The notion of utopia as unreal is superseded by utopian as powerfully real as 'hope and desire (and even fantasies) are real, never merely fantasy'; rather they are a 'force that moves and shapes history (cited in Dolan, p.2005, pp.6-7). In Dolan's view it is also necessary to hold a view of utopia as processual which starts in the moment of theatre through short enactments of those imagined possibilities, and not utopia as an idea of future perfection that may be never reached (ibid).

The idea of utopia as processual and involving human agency is manifestly valuable to a philosophy of drama/theatre education that places democracy at its centre. The building of an imaginary place to live, improved or more desirable than the present through our sustained encounters and imaginings that a dramatic critical pedagogy aims at, relies primarily on our 'praxis' or 'practical fictions which are called ideologies and utopias' (Valdes, 1991, p. 117).

Prendergast has analyzed Dolan's philosophical investigation of utopian performatives in relation to drama/theatre education to suggest that 'the dramatic explorations of utopias and their oppositions are centrally interested in the idea and practice of hope as enactive processes that arise from the articulation of desires for a better world'. She also adds that because drama/theatre is built on conflict and tension, it is the dystopian thinking and imagining that makes us see its opposite as more desirable and worth pursuing in the actual world (2011, pp.63). As far as this specific study is concerned, the design of the workshops of the fieldwork of this study intends to exemplify this apposite observation of Prendergast where imaginative living in dystopias induces to imaginative living in utopias.

The discourse on utopia and art as embodying utopia brings us to a discussion of the idea of hope. Utopia and hope are interrelated notions. If utopia is a vision for the 'what if', hope is a requirement, the impulse for moving towards its fulfillment. As Freire remarks in the *Pedagogy of Hope*, hope is affiliated with human existence and its struggle for improving it. It is an 'ontological need' the absence of which is tantamount to immobilization,

paralysis and compliance to fatalism; hope is not enough by itself as 'it needs practice in order to become historical concreteness' (2004, p.2). As he adds elsewhere, hope is address, is destination (2000).

In relating utopia, hope and drama/theatre I would like to refer to Ben Anderson and his ideas on hope and utopia as influenced by the work of Ernst Bloch. Anderson's apt remarks render the image of drama/theatre as a place to enact utopia and a space of hope. We apply ourselves to what we hope for through our dramatic practice and experience at least for moments, a better world.

In his encyclopedia of hope, Bloch illustrates some examples of hope. He refers for instance to the realm of anticipatory consciousness as wishful thinking, to wishful images, to outlines of a better world and to various classes of experience as contemplation and happiness. A drama/theatre pedagogue would realize at once that those examples of hope are immanent in the process of drama/theatre and thus hope as a mode of encountering the world as Anderson puts it, is indwelling in the process. In the aforementioned examples, according to Bloch, there is a moment of hope that 'exceeds what had become actual in a specific context to touch a "front" a "horizon" (Bloch cited in Anderson, 2006, p. 694) which brings us to utopia. The utopic process, as Anderson explains, 'is thinking in a way that is synchronous with a moment of hope, the most important of these concepts is the 'not-yet' (ibid, p. 695). The 'not-yet' has two constitutive elements, the 'not-yet conscious' and the 'not-yet possible'. Here lies the burden of the argument on drama/theatre as the place to enact utopia. The dual realities that we dwell in, in drama/theatre education and the chance to act and observe ourselves and

others act is the first step towards realizing alternative possibilities. The work we do in drama/theatre works on the 'not-yet conscious', which is in my opinion the first step towards what is 'not-yet possible'. Realizing what is not might impel us to consider what can be.

Another equally significant thought that Anderson analyzes, relevant to drama/theatre education and this study is the explanation that Bloch gives of utopia as an excessive, disrupting process. This definition of utopia recapitulates Ricoeur's description of the disruptive function of imagination and Dolan's concept of utopia as process, described earlier. Specifically what is of interest here is that utopianism is not reduced or equated with the imagination of another future. As he puts it:

'a vision only becomes part of utopic processes through the performative effects it has rather than due to its representational content or form. The defining task of utopianism is therefore to make interventions in those utopic processes... this task can be achieved through multiple types of intervention. Much more besides visions can and do become part of utopic processes and thereafter achieve utopic effects' (Anderson, 2006, p. 703).

Importantly, then, in imagining we create images in the mind, or visions, which can be carried into effect in such a way that there is transcending without transcendence, as Anderson appealingly puts it (2006). We can experience in other words, in an imaginary sphere, how it is to exceed

our situations; we hold these possibilities before the mind believing in their truth.

1.4.2.2 The Experience of Freedom

Germane to the above ideas on utopia and hope is a dimension of freedom intrinsic to art. As Elgin writes, art has more degrees of freedom than other disciplines (2009) and this dimension of freedom is fundamental when talking about democracy as a 'system' that depends on the actions of the people that are part of that 'system'.

Interpreting freedom from within the sphere of drama/theatre, there must be a dissociation of the concept of freedom from that of liberty. Freedom does not relate to the notion of liberty but, as Greene explains, human freedom is the capacity to override the given and look at things as if they could change, where changing things requires more than just the will to become different; it requires being able to accomplish what one chooses to do, too. Thus the search for freedom induces the search for a kind of critical understanding. Greene relates freedom to the discovering of new possibilities, to seeking alternative ways of being, to breaking with the habitual and the routine. Expanding options and knowing alternatives as the expression of freedom, then, depends upon our actions and praxis (1988).

While she also acknowledges that freedom achieved can only involve a partial surpassing of determinateness, the burden of the argument on freedom is whether the experience of freedom could promote a sense of agency. Since

freedom is dependent upon our actions, it is interesting to explore whether acting alternatively - meaning acting in a way different from the monotonous and repetitive - relates to more autonomous and agentic ways of being. I will propose that the play element in drama, the playfulness of this artistic form, allows for the experience of freedom. Before going any further with the above, an elucidation of the concept of play is necessary.

Huizinga explains play as a voluntary activity. The main characteristic of play is that it is free. 'It is in fact freedom'. 'The need for it is only urgent to the extent that the enjoyment of it makes it a need...It is never imposed by physical necessity or moral duty. It is never a task;' (1949, p. 8). Play is consciously different from ordinary life, as an occupation happening within certain limits of time and place which absorbs the players completely and intensely. It happens within rules that are freely accepted but entirely binding. As a free, voluntary activity it is also a source of joy, amusement.

Drama is playful. Participants in dramatic worlds play and this play is non-coercive. Participants play because they wish to and not because they are obliged to and when they play even the most exhausting game they do so for pleasure, escaping at the same time from responsibility and routine (Valery 1943 in Caillois, 2001). Playing in drama, then, should be seen as a free activity. It is 'free within the limits set by the rules'. Often in drama there are not rules in the sense of the rules of a game but an imaginary 'as if' situation is created within which it is possible to play. According to Caillois, the sentiment of 'as if' performs the same function as rules do (2001, p.8).

Playing in drama is about experiencing freedom, about expending options and knowing alternatives. I will explain the connection between play, freedom and agency, by commenting on Isaiah Berlin's notions of positive and negative liberty.

Commenting from the field of social and political philosophy, Berlin in contrast with Greene uses the words freedom and liberty interchangeably (1969). Although his focus is on political freedom, I will refer to his two notions on liberty to develop the argument on the experience of freedom in drama and explain how this contributes to an education for democracy.

Berlin explains that the negative conception of freedom relates to what one is free to do or be and the positive conception relates to who defines what one is free to do or be (ibid). According to Carter, 'Negative liberty Berlin initially defined as freedom from, that is the absence of constraints on the agent imposed by other people. Positive liberty he defined both as freedom to, that is the ability to pursue and achieve willed goals; and also as autonomy or self-rule as opposed to dependence on others' (2008). Negative liberty refers to the absence of obstacles external to the agent whereas positive liberty is about the presence of control on the part of the agent.

Drama represents a space in which participants play. Negative liberty and positive liberty come into play with dramatic playing. This distinction between negative and positive liberty is not sharp/acute and is useful to the extent that it allows us to explain how the experience of freedom depends much on the agent's beliefs, desires and values. There is no aim here to demonize negative liberty in favor of positive liberty. In any case a total

annulment of external obstacles that constrain the agent is neither possible nor desirable.

Dramatic playing is about experiencing freedom. Players play, being aware of a second reality or of a 'free unreality' as Caillois would call it (2001, p.) that can be freely experienced, whose structures can be questioned or altered. This is where this division between positive and negative liberty becomes useful as it allows for a concentration on the agent himself/herself and for an exploration of situations where he/she defines his/her own freedom. As drama pedagogues we can create a community of play, a grouping of players that imagine together and this 'matters too much' as Zipes stresses. Through fantasy by which he means imagination we can explore freedom which is necessary for spiritual regeneration and for seeking alternatives to our realities. Importantly, we need fantasy for resistance through critical reflection. He encapsulates fantasy as explained by Adorno as both a capacity to change existing conditions by negating the material reality and as a product which proposes alternatives to the existing state of things (2009).

I would like to bring some connections between imaginative play as a situation of 'freedom in discipline' which creates the necessary conditions for exploring democracy practically. I use the phrase 'freedom in discipline' as the 'as if' sentiment attributes some levels of limitation which make collective play effective. In other words, imaginative play places some limitations which makes it possible to experience freedom.

Arendt according to Tully looks at political activity as games. In more detail, she explains that in games players take on specific identities and in this sustain the field of action of the game. Likewise in politics humans take on identities as citizens and through this activity create and sustain the public sphere respectively. She describes those activities as free because they are diverse from the habitual routines of everyday life (Arendt 1977 in Tully, 1999).

Foucault in a similar way describes human activities as games and takes a step further from Arendt to speak of *agonic* games and the need for *agonic* activity where players struggle to modify the rules of the game by what they do and how they do it and in this way modify also their identities (Foucault 1997b in Tully, 1999).

The above statements are of great importance to this thesis as in the drama we do we play politics. In the parallel worlds that are created participants perform politics. In Foucault's sense participants are encouraged to modify the rules of the game which is itself an 'agonic' game of freedom precisely because participants are free to speak and act differently (ibid, p. 168). This happens on a dual level. It happens not only within the fictitious reality that they create and live in but also in the drama lesson itself where they have the opportunity to affect in some level its course by the choices they make.

Ultimately, the freedom to act and think differently is relevant to the creation of the identity of the democratic personality. In the context of the game this means that the ability to think and act in ways that are definitive of

the identity of a player are acquired through the exercise of the players themselves with others in the game itself (Tully, 1999). Similarly the nature of the drama allows the players to think and act in ways that are definitive of the identity of the democratic personality as they play.

1.4.2.3 Engaged Pedagogy and the Aesthetic

Living critical pedagogy through drama is possible because of the experience of *the aesthetic*. That is, practicing a way of life as democracy through art is possible through the aesthetic engagement that takes place in the encounter of ourselves with works of art or speaking specifically for drama/theatre, through our presence in the worlds of art.

I will try to explain the aesthetic as a manner of involvement, by making reference to the ideas of Greene. Greene reads the aesthetic as an adjective that describes the mode of experience initiated from encounters with works of art and as a way to develop a more active sensibility and awareness in our students. She finds her explanation on Dewey's conception of 'aesthetic' as the opposite of 'anaesthetic'. 'Anaesthesia' as she comments, 'implies a numbness, an emotional incapacity, and this can immobilize, prevent people from questioning, from meeting the challenges of being in and naming and perhaps transforming the world' (Greene, 2001, p.x).

Abbs makes an important addition to the nature of the aesthetic as he explains aesthetic as pertaining both to cognition and emotion. He describes aesthetics as a 'distinct category of understanding... a mode of sensuous

knowing, (a response) that is cognitive in nature.’ (cited in Greenwood, 2011, p.47). On the same matter Reid connects the aesthetic with feeling and points out that feeling has a crucial function to perform in knowing and understanding as it has a cognitive function (1973).

Commenting on the writings of Abbs, Dewey and Eisner, Greenwood mentions that their analyses of the aesthetic emphasize the experiential, subjective and socially constructed nature of the aesthetic. The same is true for Greene as Dewey’s ideas are foundational to her work. An understanding of the aesthetic as such is helpful for this thesis as the aesthetic experiences pursued through the drama workshops are based on the subject as an essential element to the aesthetic encounter; and in any case, as Reid underlines, it is difficult to think of aesthetic qualities existing without anyone experiencing them (1973). The subjective reaction now is valuable to the aesthetic encounter as it is the stepping stone to advance understanding of and through the encounter (Elgin, 2009).

The aesthetic dimension of drama/theatre that generates the aesthetic experiences qualifies them as pedagogies that are engaging. I will quote here once more Reid writing on art and the aesthetic when he says that ‘art and the aesthetic enjoyment of art, is a strenuous lifelong pursuit of illimitable human importance. It is the learning through the art, the increase and growth of a unique kind of understanding that matters supremely. The joy it can bring is immense’ (1973, pp.177-178). The feeling of joy or pleasure as a quality of the aesthetic absorbs and engages one in art. As Barkan notes, the aesthetic experience is a kind of experience that is valued for its own sake. Involvement in an aesthetic experience either as ‘listening, looking, performing or

producing, embodies the desire to sustain and live the moment for its own sake' (p.147 cited in Field, 1973).

The value of drama/theatre and its critical function in what concerns the formation of a new sensibility lies in the aesthetic. Philosopher and political theorist Herbert Marcuse explored the aesthetic dimension of art to claim that the political potential of art resides in its own aesthetic dimension. The aesthetic form sublimates the given reality and alienates us from our functional existence and performance in society, while it is also committed to the releasing of sensibility, imagination and reason. Importantly, Marcuse indicates that the permanence of certain qualities of art namely transcendence, estrangement, aesthetic order and manifestations of the beautiful, contribute to the changing of the consciousness of the people who could change the world (1979).

If one thinks of the aesthetic as a manner of involvement, of sensuous understanding that is cognitive in nature, as Abbs does, it is possible to realize the meaning of aesthetic democracy. The aesthetic as lying in experiencing art helps us reconceive democracy in new terms. It aestheticizes democracy; that is, it makes it understandable through aesthetic means.

In the following chapter, I will expand on how these ideas on living critical pedagogy can take shape in educational contexts.

1.5 *Aesthetic Communities*: Formation and Scope

Taking the lead from the previous chapter, in this chapter, I will focus in more detail on how the idea of living critical pedagogy through drama/theatre can take a more specific form. I will investigate whether an aesthetic communicative nexus that the students are encouraged to form and the artistic actions within that nexus prepare the ground for the development of the democratic personality. The concept of the *aesthetic community*, its formation and scope and the particularity and political scope of the artistic actions as those that sustain the *aesthetic community* will be explored.

1.5.1 Issues with focusing on the body

The same qualities that count as the elements that could assist the flourishing of democratic possibilities should be taken into consideration when framing work with groups of students. This statement along with the acknowledgement that drama work is practical work that involves a lot of working with the body, introduces issues about personal space, physical contact and appropriate boundaries and issues about the cultural and social construction of the body and how this is experienced (Nicholson, 2005). Similarly, drama is where we appear in public, according to Neelands (2003). The body functions as a public image and this condition often deters participants from getting actively involved in drama unless they feel protected and respected. A condition that could protect the body and deploy to the utmost the potentialities of the art form of drama/theatre in favor of democratic

ends is the creation of communities that might help to attend to issues such as the above.

1.5.2 The Idea of an *Aesthetic Community*

The quest is for the development of a link between people that is located in art and in this, a legitimization of art as a value that transcends aesthetic pleasure and transmutes it into a power that educates (Schiller, 1990). The educative potential of the aesthetic experience, about which Schiller has extensively written, (ibid) is the core of my argument, with the aesthetic experience emanating from drama and theatre practice.

The formation of alternative groupings is promoted, groupings that could operate as learning contexts and give rise to new forms of relationship. These new forms of connection are grounded in drama and its aesthetic dimension and its power to engage the senses. More specifically, participants are encouraged through drama activities to create and sustain communities that do not exist physically. Participants in drama could compose distinguishable kinds of groupings, communities of interest that are different from moral communities in the sense that they will not hold together their members by moral codes. Instead they could be formed on the base of what interests them, on what they enjoy doing both in the way of working in the drama and the theme that they dissert on within the drama. These micro-communities could be called *aesthetic communities* (Nehamas, 2007).

1.5.3 Community and the *Aesthetic Community*

Before moving to a further analysis of the term *aesthetic community*, it is helpful to take into consideration examinations of community from other areas, before stepping into the fields of art, as we can gain important insights about communities as ways of arranging human togetherness. In this way it is easier to assess its scope before moving to a re-appraisal of the concept through the lenses of art.

Community is a dubious term and it has been approached differently by influential thinkers. Therefore there is not a universally shared concept of community and every attempt to use the term must tackle its vagueness. From the side of the sociologists, firstly, Zygmunt Bauman refers to community as a word that leaves us with positive impressions; and what the word evokes is everything we miss. It is something which is not available to us and that we wish to possess. Real community in his reading offers security in exchange for freedom (2001). As a form of engagement it takes something of our freedom, of choosing for ourselves. Freedom and security are two values that we prize and need in a globalized world but as he explains there is a tension between freedom and security that cannot be resolved and therefore we need to find ways to balance them to some degree (2001).

Secondly, Amitai Etzioni sees communities as social webs of people who know one another and stand on a shared moral base. Through the communitarian approach, he believes in the strengthening of community to balance between rights and responsibilities and to address the problem of

individualism, critiquing at the same time the libertarian position that reinforcing one sort of community means weakening another (1993).

From the side of the political theorists, Iris Marion Young suggests that community privileges unity over difference and that it is problematic, as people in a community will exclude people they don't identify with. In her work on community, which is influenced by the psycho-analytic theories of Julia Kristeva, she notes that the desire for mutual identification in social links leads to exclusions in a similar way. The ideal of community in which the issue of identification is encompassed is utopian, as mutual identification denotes the desire for understanding others as they understand themselves and the desire to be understood as I understand myself, which is not feasible. In some cases, she adds, it can actually encourage extreme occurrences such as racism and ethnic chauvinism (1990).

These analyses concern community as a model of social organization which is not the case in my research but there are some parallels to be drawn. What is proposed is another form of community which functions within drama/theatre educational contexts; it is about a different conceptualization of community which is again political but in the broader sense of the term, that of being apt for an education that envisions democratic and just futures. The issues of freedom, of security, of responsibility and rights and of identification that are discussed in the above evaluations of community are issues that an artistic/aesthetic view of the term should not neglect.

1.5.4 Aesthetic Community, Beauty and Taste

Dewey argues that an essential prerequisite for aesthetic satisfaction is the sense of freedom and personal interest (1934). It is important thus that the participants are free to have a say on how and what they prefer to work with. Belonging is then by choice as these kind of communities will be welded together by participants' preferences and ideas (Jenkins, 1996). The aesthetic activities within the drama could yield aesthetic pleasure and develop attachments between the members. The aesthetic process that is implemented could provide, according to Boal, both intellectual and emotional stimuli and the different aesthetic processes that they choose could make the world visible in different ways (2006).

Different groups under different circumstances and in different environments will have different interests that will drive their choices. The word interest as Arendt comments denotes the inter-est, what is between (Arendt, 1958). It renders that which connects two things otherwise different (Dewey, 1944 p.127). Interest now has a direct reference to taste. That is the participants are provoked to choose what they like more from what is available to them in order to work with and learn from that. The extension to beauty is also relevant.

Beauty is a contested concept in the field of aesthetics, therefore one should be more particular in its use. I will follow Hume's ideas in his essay *Of the Standard of Taste*, who speaks of beauty as no quality in things themselves but as something that exists solely in the mind and each mind will perceive a different beauty. Judgments about beauty, as Hume asserts, arise

from feeling, sentiment in his words and all sentiment is right as sentiment has a reference to nothing beyond itself (1757). He also speaks for inconsistency and contradiction as far as a standard of taste is concerned; a great variety of taste exists not only between people of different cultures and distant ages but also among individuals that have had the same education (1757).

Janet Wolff two centuries later makes a claim for the need to recognize the situated nature of all judgments (2008). Aesthetic judgments never command universal agreement and in this case, as she states, we can talk about the 'discursive production of values' in the field of aesthetics from particular social groups, in particular social contexts (ibid). Nehamas contributes to this idea about the possibility of the formation of aesthetic groups and the negotiation of aesthetic values within that group that will sustain it by arguing that aesthetic values have a narrower domain than moral values and that aesthetic values can be the marks of distinction as they drive individuals to smaller and more distinct groups through which it is possible for them to stand out (2007).

Beauty as a value is not only the force that could create these collectivities but it is also a bodily experience. Beauty has a depiction on the body. As Elaine Scarry writes, beauty adrenalizes, it makes the heart beat faster (1999, p.25). The immediate impression from an encounter with beauty is just of its most obvious aspects (Armstrong, 2004). At the same time by deliberately drawing attention to the beautiful we also touch upon two valuable ideas, that of pleasure and that of promise.

As far as the idea of pleasure is concerned, it is already in a way implied earlier in this chapter through the discussion of taste. Armstrong talks of the secret power of beauty as 'expansive, pleasure bearing, direct and immediate' (2005, cited in Winston, 2006b, p. 299). By focusing on the beautiful, the participants are tempted to get involved in the learning process. We try to offer some pleasure in order to attract the attention and focus of the participants in the learning process; to make the process more captivating. Pleasure relates to the aesthetic, an idea that is reiterated throughout this thesis.

Promise, as Herbert Marcuse affirms, is a quality of the aesthetic form and more accurately of the beautiful as a quality of the aesthetic form (1978) and the meaning of promise as a quality of the beautiful relates to aspects of reconstructing the world. As Scarry sees it, to respond to beauty is to see life as more vivid and worth living (1999).

1.5.5 Political scope of the *aesthetic community*

The *aesthetic community* as an imagined community might provide a shared symbolic space housing common interests. It is about the students creating a particular aesthetic communicative nexus that allows for insidership. Insidership in a community particularly could offer both safety and the chance to find a way to relate individual, personal interests with the collective interests.

A reference to interest has already been made, citing the signification and value of interest as that which brings together things otherwise distant. Taking an interest enmeshes the personal and the collective element insomuch as taking an interest denotes on the one hand affection, concern and motive towards that which is of my interest and on the other hand that which is held in common in a group (Dewey, 1944, p. 125) To participate in an interest means to care about and be attentive to. In this lies the potential for strong identifications between the members as participation in an interest provides opportunities to refer my action to that of others and to consider the action of others to direct my own (ibid).

The importance of sharing an interest lies also in the fact that interest could be a force of continuous bonding, for as long as the members share the same interest the group is maintained. *Aesthetic community*, therefore, is about a limited circle of persons, who share private interest and the sharing of interest is the condition that allows the people to have access to this grouping with the potential of identifications with others who participate in the same interest.

Aesthetic community as a constitution can provide an alternative way of thinking about democracy and the politics of difference. As Young notes, social justice is based on a positive definition of group difference seen as more liberating than the transcendence of group difference (2001). Although Young is dissenting from the idea of community as that which privileges unity over difference, *aesthetic community* as I argue, promotes a politics of difference. A reformulation of the meaning of difference is necessary at this point in order to stress the desirability of not eliminating group difference as a

necessary presupposition of a pluralist society. Difference is not seen as a 'description of the attributes of a group, but as a function of the relations between groups and the interaction of groups within institutions.' (Littleton, 1987 cited in Young, 2001, p. 272). This view of difference that rests on the relations between groups is not exclusive as it allows us to think that groups might have overlapping experiences and/or things in common. In short, it bespeaks that groups are always similar in some ways and it is possible that they share some attributes, goals and experiences (Young, 2001). In this understanding, the *aesthetic community* can be the mechanism that stresses the positivity of group difference. This difference is based on the aesthetic parameters that the members themselves set and which supports pluralism, heterogeneity as basic to justice and democratic culture.

In earlier sections I have mentioned Bauman's view that, if it is possible for community to exist, that will also mean gaining security at the expense of freedom (2001). In the case of the school-based *aesthetic community*, though, this could be different. This network of relationship is supposed to be primarily formed because the members will be given the opportunity to have a say on how and what they will learn.

In the first place, making such a choice does allow some latitude. But, to correlate being free only with choice, limits its importance writes Fred Inglis (2007). 'Freedom is self government of a person, a people. To be free is to be independent, self-reliant, self-directed, self-confident, self-critical, self-controlled, unafraid and un-self-ish.' (ibid, p.17). The above qualities that purport the deeper meaning of what freedom means could be cultivated or developed further with drama/theatre.

Additionally, the value of freedom is immanent in this symbolic construction of community because communication and participation happen by means of the imagination. Imagination is the capacity to see things as if they were different; it implies the power of possibility (Dewey, 1934). It is a force that allows the individual to shape other worlds or re-shape the existing. As Sartre states, the ability to imagine is equivalent to an ability to detach ourselves from our actual situations (cited in Warnock, 1978). Imagination thus, liberates us from our realities and creates the aesthetic distance that will make perceptible, visible and audible things that in everyday life are not. This is also relevant to what James Thompson's argues; that by experiencing actions that avoid the narrow, stereotypical and singular we could perhaps weave ourselves into a range of groups/ communities (2003).

The *aesthetic community* might represent a locus where a network of constraint and possibility regarding action could be negotiated with the potential of renegotiation of this network. The focus on action is important because action is according to Arendt 'the political activity par excellence' (1958, p.9). From her philosophical point of view action is a mode in which human beings appear to each other not as physical objects but *qua* human. This appearance is different from mere bodily existence because it involves initiative. The occurrence of action discloses the person who acts, the acting human, and it cannot happen in isolation; action needs the surrounding presence of others (ibid).

In this light, the *aesthetic community* could be the potential constitution of a shared space for action and deliberation as it ensures the presence of people who act in order to communicate. Arendt's analysis of the public realm

is helpful in order to build on the above assertion. The public realm is the establishment of a space between individuals. This in-between space provides the physical context within which political action can arise (Arendt, 1958). The notion of the public realm is not restricted to the space of appearance but purports also to the world we hold in common (d' Entreves, 1992).

Likewise, an *aesthetic community* could operate within the sphere of art as an imaginable public space where again action and deliberation will be the reasons for its existence. It may function on a much smaller scale as an imaginable public space with qualities that resemble the way that the public sphere operates. As an in-between space it could provide the physical context in which artistic action this time can arise. I recognize that this is a complex argument but I will illustrate what I mean in practice in subsequent sections when I come to analyse my fieldwork.

1.5.5 The particularity of artistic actions

The *aesthetic community* operating as the context for our activities shares the same characteristics with community as Bauman has defined it (2001); small as all the members know each other, distinctive as membership comes from a particular and shared aesthetic interest; and self-sufficient in the sense of covering the needs that come about within the community. Community in this regard is a way of organizing human togetherness and thus it is political.

Experiences within an *aesthetic community* are political in nature and under certain circumstances it is possible to articulate political experiences. As Maxine Greene argues, simply being in the presence of art does not mean that you necessarily have an aesthetic experience. On the contrary, aesthetic experience is possible only through conscious participation (1995). Within this collectivity, then, we encourage responsible, deliberative and conscious artistic actions in the way that the drama lessons are structured and delivered.

Artistic actions are those which could breed aesthetic experiences with artistic being an essential accompaniment to action, considering Paul Valery's statement that art has come to mean ways of doing that involve voluntary action or action initiated by the will (1972). I also speak of artistic as Dewey defines it, meaning not only enjoying something but also knowing how and why it is made (1934). In this sense we negotiate meaning through symbolic action and everything that is done in drama is done for a reason. The *aesthetic community* fosters artistic action and in its turn artistic action sustains the *aesthetic community*.

Artistic action signals a way that students work in drama that resembles the way actors work. They are encouraged to work along with the same principles. In drama and theatre reality is mediated through metaphor, analogy and symbolism (Gallagher, 2000). Meaning is communicated through the ways that render the artistic and the aesthetic aspects of the dramatic process. Artists' actions in order to be characterized as such are also conscious, deliberate and responsible. Consciousness, responsibility and deliberation are immanent in every artistic action since every artistic

accomplishment is not accidental or casual. Every artistic accomplishment does not just happen. It is made to happen.

Artistic actions can be paralleled to political actions as both are a kind of public behaviour and they share the same attributes but each one in its own scope. Political action as artistic action must also be conscious, deliberate and responsible.

1.5.6 Artistic actions in political terms

The attachment through the aesthetic and the artistic actions within the nexus that is created aim at a general preparation of the participants' attitude and amelioration of their potentiality towards art and democracy and not to the expectation of particular or countable results. In work with students, the important thing is the *art work* and not the *artwork* as Rasmussen and Gurgens define it. The authors differentiate between the work of art, the art product that is part of high-status theatre institutions; and the artistic accomplishment, the encounter with art that interests us when working with students (2006). This encounter with art and the structuring of the form that this will take is what supports the democratic scope.

Encouraging artistic action within the aesthetic community may support democratic aims and especially the experience of the kind of action that concerns our common lives as entities of a society and a polity, for artistic action is of especial value. It is the only case of action, 'the action of art' that does not cause alienation because it is directed internally (Leondaritou, cited

in Schiller, 1990) (author's translation). There is intention embodied in it that comes from within and this characterizes it as agentic.

Through art it is possible to foster reflection on the self as actor in the world as a result of knowledge. We are concerned then not only with knowledge but also with the extension of that knowledge into action (Aronowitz cited in Freire, 1998) positing that the self is not a priori defined. Instead, it is in constant formation through the choice of action (Dewey cited in Greene, 1998). In speaking of art we are also referring to certain qualities such as transcendence, estrangement, aesthetic order and the manifestations of the beautiful that their permanence can, as Marcuse writes, contribute to an emancipation of imagination, sensibility and reason. These qualities of art that differentiate the artistic experience from the everyday experience can enrich everyday experiences as they help the opening of new horizons from where or of how to view reality.

What I would like to argue for is the potential of the discursive production of a collective identity that is signified by participant membership in this particular aesthetic environment. Our doings within the nexus may lead to the formation of a collective identity which ultimately may channel our doings.

Earlier I have commented on Arendt's theory of action and of public space as important components of her concept of politics but their educational overtones are perhaps still latent. Arendt's analyses on the above address, as d' Entreves states, two issues; that of the constitution of collective identity and that of the conditions that concern the exercise of effective political agency (1992). Correspondingly, at the micro-level of the drama class the *aesthetic*

community and the artistic actions within the community may also address both the creation of a collective identity and the issue of promoting agency.

1.6 'Political body': An identity through theatre

'Democratic societies are always works in progress and in order to sustain them, the civic commitment of the humanities is needed.'

(Myers, 2002, p.216)

This chapter will address the issue of promoting the idea of a democratic culture within the context of drama/theatre. More specifically I will focus on identity development. A choice as such is not random. It arises from a view that sees as necessary the constitution of a democratic self that can create and sustain a culture of democracy. This has its roots in the ideas of Walt Whitman on the democratic personality.

Myers, building on Walt Whitman's ideas, stresses the need to talk first of a democratic culture and then of a democratic government as there can be no democratic government without a democratic culture. Democracy as she adds demands free governing institutions, a sufficiently free market and democratic cultural institutions and attitudes; we get preoccupied with the first two and forget the last one without which the first two cannot exist (2002).

Whitman looks at democracy not as a political system but rather from within the lens of culture. Culture is not seen as a distinct sphere of human activity but is used in a broader sense of the word. Vaclav Havel explains this better by saying that by culture we mean 'the culture of human relationships,

or human existence, of human work, of human enterprise, of public and political life' (Havel, 2002, p.197).

Democracy as Whitman writes is not only for elections, politics and party names... 'democracy is only for use there that it may pass on and come to its flower and fruits in manners, in the highest forms of interaction between men and their beliefs—in religion, literature, colleges, and schools—democracy in all public and private life' (cited in Myers, 2002, p. 191). Democracy will not be maintained through political means or legislation. Its strength and growth will be built in people's hearts, emotions and beliefs (Whitman, 2010).

Even though he writes back in the 1870, his thoughts are of contemporary relevance and the points he makes are still inspiring. His ideas on the democratic personality could form the basis or the philosophy to guide the creation and development of a kind of identity, the identity of the democratic self as the entity of the democratic culture.

1.6.1 On identity

In addressing the concept of identity one comes across the fact that it admits diverse interpretations. Bauman characterizes identity as a hopelessly ambiguous idea and a double-edge sword (2004) and Wetherell talks of its 'slippery, blurred and confusing' nature (2010, p.3). It is necessary then to specify how the concept of identity is employed here.

Identity in this study refers both to the state and the process of the creation and sustainment of the democratic self. Instead of using the terms identity or democratic self I will use the term 'political body'. The use of the term relates to the wider focus on the 'lived' body and with this I would like to stress the corporeal elements that such an education must take into consideration.

The 'political body' then is a mode of being, an identity. As an identity it denotes belonging (Bauman, 2004); belonging in groups, communities, or communities of communities, societies. The 'body' in the phrase implies the selfhood and 'political' that quality that implies connectedness with customs, practices, relationships and behavioural patterns that are constitutive elements and important parts in the life of cultures. It is not about individualities with specific positions or certain sets of attitudes; the 'political body' is that entity committed to the practices of a democratic and pluralistic society.

In considering the 'political body' as the identity of the democratic self, one should define the elements that this identity consists of. The 'political body' is the agent, the individual person that has the capacity to perceive his/her situation, reason about it and hence monitor his or her action (Schwandt, 2007). Agency matches against determinism. Agency is the potency for change.

1.6.2 Agency in political and dramatic terms

Stewart Ranson situates agency in the context of education. While the problems that society confronts are public and need a public solution, the institutions that society has developed discourage an active public domain. The erosion of public life amounts to a deterioration of the conditions of personal autonomy and collective well-being. A public of active citizens can effect change. In his words:

‘the task is to re-create or create more effectively an educated public that has the capacity to participate actively in the shaping of a learning society and polity... This will require citizens both as individuals and together to develop a much firmer sense of their agency (which Macmurray (1953) defines as reflective subject in action), both in the creative development of the projects that are to define the unfolding of their lives and in their active contribution to the social and political life of the community as a whole’ (1994, pp. 103-105).

The reason for choosing to include Ranson’s ideas on agency is that I find them compatible with Whitman’s ideas on the culture of democracy, where we are not concerned only with creating citizens so as to promote democracy as a form of government but with an aim to promote democratic sensibilities in our students that will be expressed in all forms of private and public life. He believes in the power of agency as that state of actively being in the world involving processes of learning and improvement that involve the

development of autonomy, choice and responsibility across all spheres of experience (1994). Autonomy, choice and responsibility as those features that typify the agent, are the prerequisites to the 'political body'. As Gould writes:

'the process of self- development thus consists in the formation of new capacities and in the elaboration or enrichment of existing new ones. In this process individuals may be said to widen their range of actions and social interactions and intensify or improve the quality of particular modes of action or social relation...in this development of capacities, individuals may be said to achieve greater freedom of action in the wider range of actions that are opened for their action and in the power to realize their purposes which their increased competence affords. Such a cultivation of capacities is relatively long term and of continuous process' (cited in Ranson, 1994, p.107).

There is a focus here on an alteration at the level of the self that will impinge on the levels of society and polity.

There is another relevant position of Ranson that in my opinion relates to this thesis. The shaping of a learning society and polity that Ranson examines predicates institutional reforms. Institutions are important as they buttress the forms of life that will support the creation of a learning society and polity. This is so because institutions define the purposes and course of human interplay (1994). He refers to institutions as legitimate organizations or

establishments that are known to serve the common good. By analogy, if the term institution is used in a wider sense, as a model or a kind of collective practice set as such by common agreement, theatre can function as an institution where those forms of life will be cultivated or enhanced which can support the building or strengthening of the qualities of public life.

As the institutions for democracy require participation and co-operation, theatre can play the role of an institution that supports those forms of action. This correlation between theatre and institution is comprehensible if one considers what Jenkins queries when analysing identity in relation to power and politics. "How can we fruitfully bring into the same analytical space the active lives and consciousness of individuals, the abstract impersonality of the institutional order, the ebb and flow of historical time? How to bring public issues and personal troubles into the same frame?" (1996, p.25). Through the art form of drama, participants create, invent, symbolize and represent values, ideas and feelings (Nicholson, 2000). Drama can be a playful way to speculate and practically explore the worlds we live in and other possible worlds.

In another relevant argument, Jenkins explains that institutions are a very important context in which identification becomes consequential (1996, p.25). Even though I acknowledge that he is referring here especially to concrete institutions I would like to base on this argument the idea of theatre as an institution through which identities are formed and sustained. The experience of drama/theatre provides a kind of mediation that allows the experience of actions that are different from the everyday and could perhaps strengthen our ability to respond to democracy. In other words theatre could

provide this space where we (re)present plexuses of presences, negotiating freely the 'norms of mutual recognition' (Tully, 2004). The 'norms of mutual recognition' are those 'laws or rules or conventions' under 'which the members of any system of government recognize each other as members and coordinate their interaction'. Norms of mutual recognition exist in any system of action coordination from political systems to classrooms and schools (Tully, 2004, p.86).

The important idea in Tully's analysis is that he puts forward the idea for developing institutions where partners in any form of governance can negotiate and renegotiate those intersubjective norms of recognition with a minimum of exclusion and assimilation and without resort to violence or force of any kind (ibid). The drama/theatre that we do in the classroom as a field of interaction will allow us to negotiate the norms under which partners recognize themselves and operate. This includes the relationship among the students themselves and the drama teacher-student relationship. The norms have 'a dual quality: normalizing and normative' (Weiner, 2003 cited in Tully, 2004, p. 86). Foucault explains this second aspect of the norms as 'the freedom of those subject to a norm to have a say over it: to be agents as well as subjects' (2000, p. 362-48 cited in Tully, 2004, p. 89).

Accordingly, an *aesthetic community* I propose can symbolically provide this space where all those affected by the norms can have an influence on the norms. For Tully, one acquires an identity as a citizen through one's participation in the practices and institutions of one's society; a kind of participation that allows one to have a say over the (re)negotiation of the norms of mutual recognition (ibid). Additionally, issues of recognition

relate to distribution. A struggle for recognition is at the same time a struggle for distribution. This means that struggles for recognition will affect the relations of power among the parts involved and conversely struggles for distribution bring about modifications of the norms of mutual recognition (Tully, 2000).

Within the *aesthetic community* and through the activities that will be developed progressively, taking into consideration the needs and choices of the participants, players will also participate in activities of disclosure and acknowledgement of themselves and others and of their interests. Practical activities of this kind divulge processes at an early stage of self- knowledge and self-development. 'This form of self-awareness and self-formation that comes into being in the course of the struggles' is read in political terms by Tully 'as their identity as citizens of a free and culturally diverse democracy.' (2000, p.480)

A theory of agency must be also explained within the specific context of drama/theatre. According to Wright, theories of agency have been fostered by drama education and applied theatre through their focus on the performative, action and engagement. The notion of agency 'foregrounds 'the individual, choice, freedom and intentionality' and 'speaks of being purposeful and having control in one's life' (Wright, 2011, p.111). It is necessary as he states to realize that agency also exists in relation to others. The great value of drama relies on the active participation that it enables and the meaning making and knowledge building that is developed within the aesthetic frame. Through being and interacting in the imaginary 'as-if' worlds of drama/theatre,

participants gain an awareness of themselves and others and act and observe themselves acting as authors of their own lives, as agents. Wright writes:

‘Performing our own subjectivity presents it as being corrigible and enables us to have a distance from it. The ability grows out of our own self-awareness as a reference point, that is our own bodily presence and it is this self-awareness that allows us to infer the mental states of others. In other words rationality is grounded in bodily experience and the embodied mind is intersubjectively constituted at its most fundamental levels’ (2011, p.113).

Agency for Wright transcends the level of being merely a state in which through our drama pedagogies we aim to reach and is seen as a process (ibid) where knowledge building is actively constructed by the participants.

To add to Wright’s view on agency as knowledge building through drama, I will refer to Sartre’s views on works of art. Sartre saw a work of art as ‘a free imaginative creation addressed to other freedoms’. Any work of art ‘has a kind of autonomy and offers aesthetic enjoyment in arousing... a free response’ (Davies et al., 2009, p.513). Even though he speaks of a work of art in relation to the artist, we can see the implications of this argument when referring to the drama work done with students when working as artists. In the drama work, there is always an element of freedom which allows us to disengage from our everyday world and engage in other worlds. Engagement

in other worlds implies a disclosure of the real world in some of its aspects and the freedom to alter or intervene in those worlds in different ways.

Sartre's views on the work of art accrue from his analysis of imagination. 'He describes imagining not as having images somehow internal to consciousness but as a distinctive way of having a world- a way of intending an object, of making it present but in a mode of absence' (Davies, 2009, p. 513). Sartre defines beauty as 'a value which applies only to the imaginary and which entails a negation of the world' (Sartre cited in Davies, 2009, p.514). In extension the aesthetic dimension, both in what the participants are creating and in what they are experiencing, or in how they are responding in drama, requires an imaginative negation that leaves space for conjuring other possible worlds. Through the beautiful moments or the beautiful experiences in the drama worlds, new horizons can be opened up. This brings to mind Winston's argument about the close connection between the experience of beauty and glimpses of utopia (2008). Writing on beauty and the utopian imagination Winston analyses this idea explaining that beauty should not be conceived of as a pleasant characteristic of objects but rather as 'an ideal by which it is always possible for us to be guided in reflection upon ourselves and our lives' (Armstrong, 2000 cited in Winston, 2010, p. 73).

1.6.3 Body and Agency

To further analyse agency within the context of drama I want now to refer to agency as understood by Merleau-Ponty. With this I aim to show the

connections between agency and the body and how body and identity relate within the context of drama.

Merleau-Ponty understands the self as an embodied agent. His core thesis is that the human subject is an agent who is engaged in activity and in a world. The human subject is an embodied subject and this embodied subjectivity is accredited by three features (Taylor, 1989). In the first instance the subject is inescapably in a world which means that one cannot describe the subject as separable from his/her world. 'Rather the subject is in a world which is a field of meaning' for him/her. At the same time the subject is in this world as an agent as 'he acts, he does things' which have a meaning for the subject. Therefore some events are the cause of our doing. Finally, embodied agency is not reducible to the subject being in fact embodied but that 'their manner of being as subjects, is in essential respects that of embodied agents'. This is thinkable if we turn to perception. The subject accesses the world through perception and as 'an agent who acts in and on the world' perceives the world through this activity (Taylor, 1989, pp.1-7). Ultimately, Taylor explains that we are not embodied agents because we relate to a certain body; our perception is as such because of our embodiment. As for what concerns the body and identity, embodied agency 'sets the framework...in which our identity can be worked out... For the embodied view, the body is what I am trying to assume under a certain understanding. My body is already a direction of life, partly sketched, and the locus of the as yet undetermined. This is the direction of life which I have to take up as I define it' (ibid, p. 16).

The educational overtones of this theory are still latent. If one considers the central role of the body in drama/theatre then its special contribution to identity formation is conceivable. Inhabiting the dramatic worlds and acting as agents in and on that world we get to perceive those worlds through that activity. Of course this is not because we have certain bodies but because we are bodies whose activities derive and make that world as such. The coexistence of the real and the imaginary world places the embodied activities in a sphere in which it is possible to discuss, alter, compare, amend them. To connect this again with identity, an embodied view of agency reads the body as the locus of the as yet undetermined; that is to say, myself who is already situated is capable of altering the direction of the life that I have taken.

1.6.4 Collective identity

The political body is a collective identity that is signified by participant membership in an *aesthetic community*. Our doings within the nexus of this particular *aesthetic community* may lead to the formation of a collective identity which ultimately may channel our actions.

I will start from this notion of community to explain the discursive and collective nature of the political body as relating to democracy. Bauman's reading of community is helpful at this point. For Bauman, communities to which identities refer to as entities that define them, are of two kinds, the communities of 'life and fate whose members live together in an indissoluble attachment and communities that are welded together solely by ideas or various principles' (2004, p.11). The political body is an entity that defines a

community of the second type. In this, a political body is a discursive identity where identity is seen as an act and importantly as an act of choice. One does not act on the model of the political body because of intuition, enforcement by law or moral compulsion. The political body is an identity of choice.

The political body is a collective identity. I will illustrate first how this is defined in the field of politics and then search for confluences with the micro-level of the *aesthetic community* of the drama class. Borrowing from Arendt I would like to discuss the matter of action and its importance in the constitution of a collective identity. In more detail, she views action as a mode of human togetherness, one of the three fundamental activities of being in the world. The other two are labour and work (d'Entreves, 2006). Action corresponds to the condition of plurality. Arendt refers to plurality not as 'the condition sine qua non' but the condition 'per quam' of all political life (1958, p. 7). Insofar as there is a context of plurality, action is meaningful as it is through action that humans distinguish themselves and appear to each other defined as such and not as physical objects. It also means that action cannot happen in isolation. Plurality allows humans to act and relate in ways that are unique and distinctive and thus contribute to a complex network of actions and relations (d'Entreves, 2008). This appearance, through which humans confirm their existence beyond mere bodily existence, rests on initiative. Initiative takes us to another central feature of action which is freedom. Freedom for Arendt entails the capacity to begin, to start something anew, to do the unexpected (ibid). In analyzing Arendt's ideas, d'Entreves states that whenever we engage in action and political discourse we are also engaging in the formation of a 'we' with which we are able to identify both ourselves and actions (1992).

Another important concept of Arendt's that relates to this thesis is her concept of the public realm. The public realm is that space of appearance which is necessary for the constitution of our public identities. It signifies both that space of appearance and the world we hold in common. It is a 'constructed' space not restricted specifically to a place, an in-between space that brings us closer and separates us at the same time; that physical context in which political action could arise (Arendt, 1958, pp.50-58). It is furthermore our common world in the sense that it comprises the human artifacts, the institutions and the practices that citizens share and that can be the context of our activities (d'Entreves, 1992). In correspondence, at the micro-level of the drama class the *aesthetic community* and the artistic actions within the community may address the creation of a collective identity and thus the condition of agency. The *aesthetic community* represents a shared space that provides the context for our actions. It is a public space of appearance, a potential space that comes into existence whenever we engage in action and speech about common matters.

At this point I need to part company with Arendt and bring forward for discussion Chantal Mouffe's view on collective identity. Mouffe herself points out that her perspective on the political deviates from that of Arendt. The latter views the political as a space of freedom and deliberation while for Mouffe it is a space of power, conflict and antagonism. A restricted view of democratic politics that centres on compromises among interests or on deliberation about the common view does not acknowledge the dimension of pluralism that is constitutive of modern democracy. Her thesis on collective identities is that identities of this kind tangle a 'we/they discrimination' and she proposes that

the aim is not to overcome this kind of partiality but to allow it to exist through other forms that are consistent with pluralist democracy (Mouffe, 1996). Pluralism should be reinforced; pluralism of a kind that does not exorcize what is different and refuses homogeneity.

Allowing and supporting pluralism heralds an acknowledgement of power not as a deleterious effect but as a dynamic relation which constitutes 'any social objectivity'. Insofar as power is not a deleterious effect 'the main question of democratic politics then becomes not how to eliminate power but how to constitute forms of power that are compatible with democratic values' (Mouffe, 1996, pp. 247-248).

Elsewhere Mouffe explains that since identity is relational, meaning that the existence of a collective identity, a 'we', presupposes the existence of another collective identity, a 'they', discrimination is the base for existence. But this discrimination does not necessarily have to be translated as antagonistic. Rather she offers a type of relation that she names 'agonistic' and in which conflict becomes legitimate. Conflict is seen as legitimate, when there is a common bond between those involved in order not to dissolve the political association (Mouffe, 2005, p. 20). Later I will provide some examples as to how within the drama the political is seen as a space of power, conflict and antagonism.

As I have referred to Arendt it is worth noting her conceptions of politics that specifically relate to the body. According to Tambornino she is one of the few political theorists who does not ignore the body. On the contrary, she is aware of the body while her position is ambivalent and often hostile towards it.

‘With some exceptions, the body is said to epitomize brute need, enslaving necessity, unrelieved homogeneity and radical privacy’ (2002, p.16). Especially on the matter of initiative the body is not considered as offering much. The role of the body in selfhood and identity is not seen as essential and the same happens with the body’s attributes such as need, passion, desire and feeling in judging and thinking.

This thesis is concerned with work on the level of the body in relation to micro-politics in the classroom. Yet Arendt’s politics do not deal with work on the body, nor is the body considered a constituent element in the preparation for such politics. Tambornino though explains that the fact that Arendt herself accepts the body’s social and cultural assimilation could form the ‘basis for exploring possibilities for working on the body and modifying sensations and feelings (and their entwined passions, desires, sentiments, moods and dispositions) that enter politics’ (2002, p.34). In more detail, Tambornino offers a revised Arendtian politics which enmeshes modifications of feelings through techniques of the self that involve the body that potentially affect thinking and judging and thus, in turn, enable acting.

Neglecting the body equals neglecting the crucial dimensions of life. Incorporating the body would mean looking for ways that politics could ‘be attentive to the entire relationship between corporeality and politics - the influence of thinking and acting on the body and its influence on thinking and acting (2002, p.34).

1.6.5 Collective identity and its Malcontents

Collective identities are recognized as a necessary part of political life.

However, collective identities have their critics. As Parekh mentions, collective identity essentializes identity and imposes on the relevant groups 'a unity of views and experiences they do not and cannot have' (2008, p.35). On the political level, for example, Parekh explains the danger that collective identity becomes essentialized because of concentration on one identity to the exclusion of others. He argues that humans have overlapping identities such as gender, religious, ethnic identities and that those should not be concealed in one. The way that this might be conveyed in the micro-political level of the group we form is that everyone must be free to bring and contribute to the drama work in the way that he/she feels most comfortable with or interested in. To be more precise I will use the term 'personal identity'. Personal identity is one of the three aspects of an individual's identity according to Parekh. Personal identity refers to the individual per se, to his/her self-consciousness, body, biography and sense of selfhood. The other aspects of this overall identity are social identity and human identity.

If we appropriate Parekh, the individuality and specific contribution of every participant that relates to his/her personal identity must be praised. In other words, we need to appreciate the plurality of our identities; that the personal or other identities co-exist and interact along with the political identity of necessity.

Through our drama pedagogies it is possible to enhance this interaction between our different identities in ways that help them shape each

other. The collective identity of the political body is one of our identities and through the drama we do we should not concentrate only on this but allow for others to arise. In addition, the collective identity of the political body challenges the objectivist view that Parekh mentions as one of the dangers of collective identity. Referring especially to social identities, she makes it clear that social identity is not given passively but is a product of interpretation. Thus it has a subjective dimension inherent to it (2008). In parallel, the political body is a discursive identity, an identity of choice where the participants themselves are asked to evaluate and take it as their own through live experience.

Another drawback is 'its tendency to create false antinomies between closed wholes' (Parekh, 2008, p.36). Namely, it creates sharp distinctions between groups who define themselves as opposites and against each other.

The *aesthetic community* as a collective creation is constructed on those choices that would differentiate it from another *aesthetic community*. This differentiation is not absolute and it is positive since this differentiation is based on aesthetic interests. Different *aesthetic communities* might exist but not necessarily against each other and this is where they differ from moral communities. (Nehamas, 2007)

This is again what Mouffe means when she insists on the need to acknowledge the political in its antagonistic dimension. Collective identities are essential in all political life and should be constituted in an 'agonistic' way where the parts involved are not enemies but rather adversaries. The distinction between collective identities should not be on the level of right or

wrong, namely on the moral level, but between one interest and another (2005).

Collective identities are reference points of action. They help people make sense of what they are experiencing and offer hope for the future (ibid). In order for this to happen, democratic politics should bring to the fore and not override people's desires and passions. This last argument demands closer attention. This idea incorporates the corporeal turn of this thesis in relation to an education for democracy and it will be further analysed in the following section.

1.6.6 Theatre, Habit, Identity

In this part I shall try to present a 'carnal' view – to use Nick Crossley's term - of the notion of identity. Crossley uses this term to speak of Goffman's achievement to move further from an analysis of 'what is done to the body in the social world, how it is acted upon and represented to a counter analysis of what the body does in the social world, how it acts.' (1995). A 'carnal' view then, explains that the body acts and is acted upon and sets the base for a dynamic place for the body in the political.

To throw some more light on the above I will again turn to another work of Crossley where he develops a habit-based theory of agency. In more detail, his ideas revolve around the claim that 'we 'are' our bodies and that our bodily ways of being are rooted in habit' underlying the fact that we are not our habits; we 'have' our habits (Crossley, 2001, p.6). Again his analysis echoes

Merleau-Pontian theories, but he takes a step further to consider the possibility of reflexivity as the capacity to think about ourselves and our actions.

Habit is seen as a competence that is acquired and flexible and not as a reflex action which is fixed, a mechanical response. Crossley differentiates himself from Bourdieu's approach to habit, which he explains as problematic and one-dimensional, where habit forms practice (without the potential for the converse). On the contrary, he proposes a dialectical relation between action and habit. Habit is 'a residue or sediment of action' (Merleau-Ponty cited in Crossley, 2001). Our actions accrue from habits but it is our previous actions that created those habits. The moment our present actions convert or change they can form new habits that will guide future actions. 'The improvised and innovative nature of action, in other words, is such that on occasion it gives rise to new and novel habits and dispositions 'coherently deforming' or transforming the structure of a given domain of practice' (p.20).

With regard to this specific thesis, Crossley's habit-based theory of agency is helpful. Through membership in an *aesthetic community* and everything that this involves, the members could start to form a *modus operandi* and in turn this *modus operandi* could guide actions and practices to be undertaken. This process in which the members start to form a mode of working is the process of developing the collective identity of the 'political body'. The formation of a collective identity is a process that must always be established or sustained through action. The process of the formation of a collective identity can then be likened to a process of 'marking'. This process of 'marking' does not involve any kind of unconscious, mimetic reactions or

coercive measures for its establishment. Rather, it is a different kind of 'marking', a gentle, subtle and indirect process of 'marking' that happens through experience and constant reflection and could provide some foundation for change. In drama, then, the formation of the identity of the 'political body' is on the one hand a processual procedure that is based on repetition, which introduces and familiarizes the participants to a repertoire of tactics; and on the other hand, the ability to act and reflect on that action that participation in drama allows. This is key to the learning that happens.

Augusto Boal refers to this process, whereby a person who is in role is able to perform and view that performance, by the term 'metaxis'. In 'metaxis' a person is simultaneously the actor and the audience of his/her acting, a state of belonging at the same time in two autonomous worlds. (Boal, 1995 cited in Linds, 2006). The coexistence of the imagined and the real world provides the ability to act and reflect on the action of the role. Linds sees metaxis as an embodied situation that refers to 'the double sense of the body as living and the experiential structure or context of cognition where living is embedded. The body is not an object, but a grouping of constantly changing lived-through meaning' (Linds, 2006, p. 114). Through metaxis then 'real acts' (Boal, 1979, cited in Linds, 2006) can be reworked and the body can become a site of knowledge.

To sum up, the actions of the 'body-subject' for Merleau-Ponty interlace with the perceptual field. The two fields, those of action and perception, function in a way that is mutually transformative. 'Understanding' then is not a subjective, incorporeal operation but 'an embodied performative ability'

(Crossley, 1995, p. 144). The agent of perception, then, is an embodied subjectivity.

1.6.7 Interlude: On Brecht

At this point I consider it necessary to refer to Bertolt Brecht's ideas that have influenced this study. Winston refers to Brecht as a major theorist along with Boal who most influenced drama education (Winston, 1998). As Brecht's work is broad and complex I will centre only on those features of his work that have a direct relevance to this thesis.

Brecht's theatre was Marxist in its origins and it sought to describe the relations of power, to show to his audiences those forces that actually shape social life and empower them to change it. His intention was to create a theatrical form through which his audiences were not to accept the events that happened before them as inevitable but view them as choices made by characters and theatrical workers (Counsell, 2004). His commitment was to show that history might be different and for this reason naturalism and realism were not appropriate forms to expose those forces that actually shape social life. Brecht created another form of theatre what he called epic theatre. Epic theatre was 'a narrative structure made up of 'episodic scenes'' (Counsell, 2004, p. 82). He used scenes that were distant in terms of time, location and social position of the character so as to engage the audience to a socio-political reading of each scene (ibid). This division of the event in episodes that were complete in themselves was based on his idea that through the interruption of action, the illusion is destroyed and identification with the

destiny that rules the hero's life is blocked (Benjamin, 1998). This form of theatre that Brecht proposes is non-Aristotelic in that it negates empathy between actor and spectator and actor and character. Brecht refers to this process as alienation. In his own words 'The aim of this effect, known as the alienation-effect, was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism in his approach to the [play's] incident' (Brecht, 1964 cited in Benjamin, 1998, p. 102).

In what concerns drama/theatre education Brecht has influenced to a great extent Dorothy Heathcote, a leading drama educationist, specifically in her use of distancing and framing techniques as herself and other commentators have noted (O' Toole et al., 2009). Heathcote's work is an approach to teaching that aims to empower students to reflect critically on issues just as Brecht is interested to do with his audiences and actors. The work done in the fieldwork follows Brecht's and Heathcote's concern to sharpen perception and to stimulate reflection through this notion of distancing (see also Eriksson 2011). The connections of the above ideas to critical pedagogy and its scope in developing the critical consciousness of the students that informs this fieldwork are obvious.

The development of critical consciousness as I was arguing earlier refers to the process in which humans as knowing subjects achieve a deepening awareness both of the socio-cultural reality that forms their lives and of their capacity to transform that reality (Macedo cited in Monchinski, 2008, p. 4). Critical pedagogy is non-deterministic in the sense that it stands on the belief that people are not determined by their situations just as Brecht's

theatre that aimed to offer a critique of the world as it is 'naturally' ideologically perceived (Counsell, 2004, p. 88).

In more practical terms, the fieldwork informed by Brechtian ideas is based on different stories to be developed. These stories deal with important issues that societies face today and are far apart in terms of time, location or the social position of the participants in the drama. The stories' courses are developed in a series of workshops and every workshop is structured in such a way that the action is constantly interrupted so as to allow for reflection and raise awareness of the participants as the ones that define the course of what is happening. In this, a democratization of the process is aimed that is in accord with Brecht's commitment to a theatrical form that created 'democratic' relations with its audience (Counsell, 2004, p. 94). A detailed description and analysis of how the fieldwork developed follows in the 'Readings from the data' chapter.

Closing with these thoughts, I will now move to the second chapter, *Methodological Considerations* in which I will refer to the epistemological and methodological frameworks of this project as well as to the choice of methods for collecting the data and to issues of validity, reliability and ethics. The chapter includes also a detailed analysis of my own research design and a portrayal of the research groups that participated in the research.

Chapter 2: Methodological Considerations

2.1 The performativity of method

In a PhD Drama Weekend organized by Warwick University in November 2007, Professor Fred Inglis gave a speech on 'Academic Inquiry and the Meaning of Life' advocating that 'intellectual and academic inquiry is a matter of finding out not only how and why people live as they do, but also how and why they ought to live instead' (2007, p.1) . Denzin and Lincoln support this idea – that, investigations within the social science field dissent on the world and intend to make a difference of some kind; in this sense they are political (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). According to them, qualitative research, is now in its 7th historical moment where social science and the humanities have become sites for critical conversations about democracy, race, gender, class, nation-states, globalization, freedom and community. I aspire to position my own research within this moment in the hope that it will serve the goals, needs, hopes and promises of free democratic societies (2003).

John Law has also written on the political nature of research. In his insightful book *After Method*, he states that methods are always political and this raises questions about the kinds of social reality that we want to make. He views method as not just a set of techniques but as a way of being since it is about the social science we practice and the kinds of people we want to be and the social realities we want to live in. The traditional Euro-American metaphysical assumption that realities 'are out-there and beyond ourselves, independent of our actions and perceptions, anterior, definite and singular' is

challenged. Law explains how realities are enacted, the enactment of which denotes a continuing crafting (2006, pp.24-25). Since realities are made they can in some way be made in other ways. Law speaks for 'interactive, remade, indefinite and multiple' realities which suggests the need for exploring the enactment of and the interactions between different realities (2006, p.122). Realities are being done alongside the representations of realities (Law, 2007). His point then is that methods are performative. They help produce realities. This ontological concept commands attention when researching from the epistemological and the methodological level to the level of method.

2.2 Epistemological concerns

Every research design, involves the researcher assuming an epistemological stance from the very beginning of the research. This indicates in its turn, the suitable strategy of inquiry to be followed and the methods of collecting and analyzing the data. In general terms epistemology is the study of the nature of knowledge. A theory of epistemology concerns the very bases of knowledge; its nature and its forms and the ways knowledge can be acquired and communicated to other human beings (Cohen, et al. 2010). Epistemology, then, as a philosophy of knowledge that provides the guidelines for every research attempt poses and provides answers to three important issues: the relationship between the knower and what is known, the way of knowing and what counts as knowledge (Krauss, 2005). The issue of epistemology is according to Jerald Pine crucial for educational research for if we accept the idea that there are different ways of knowing the world, thence

there are different ways of investigating it (2009). I will now turn to the specific epistemological assumptions that underlie this research.

2.2.1 The Framework of Critical Theory

Critical Theory is thought to be by some writers on the field, an alternative epistemology to positivism and interpretivism (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, Cohen, et al. 2010) while others think of critical theory as an ideological strand of the qualitative paradigm (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005). To begin with, a definition of the term is necessary before moving to explain the reasons for choosing this specific epistemological position to underpin this study.

Critical theory is oriented towards a critical examination of society and culture. According to Schwandt critical theory is a way of theorizing and the product of that theorizing, that positions the taken-for granted nature of the social world including its concepts, understandings, and cultural categories to critical reconsideration (2007). As a philosophical approach, critical theory is a pre-eminent movement in twentieth-century continental thought (Rush, 2004) and is one of the theories included in critical social theory 'a theory cluster' that shares similar principles and characteristics with other theories such as feminism, postmodernism and multiculturalism (Ägger cited in Hargreaves et al., 2003, p.182). The main one of those features that Ägger remarks on is the idea that domination is structural. This means that human lives are affected by larger social institutions such as politics, economics, culture, discourse, race and gender. The structures of domination are reproduced in human consciousness that in turn force humans to adapt to fixed patterns. Knowledge of the role that structure plays in domination could help people

change social conditions (cited in Hargreaves et al. 2003). Critical theory's role as Ägger adds is to raise consciousness and demonstrate the possibility for a better future (ibid).

Critical theory most commonly refers to a group of German philosophers and social theorists in the Western European Marxist Tradition known as the Frankfurt School that first came together in 1923. The term was first explained by Max Horkheimer, the Director of the Frankfurt School's Institute for Social Research, who distinguished between traditional and critical theory, stating that a theory is critical to the extent that it serves a specific practical purpose: to explain and change the circumstances that enslave human beings in opposition to a traditional theory whose purpose is merely to understand and explain (Bohman, 2005). The above idea represents one of the main characteristics of critical theory; that is, the understanding that theory provides the way we access the world. Thus it is a mode of self-reflective knowledge and in extension is part of the self-reflective public discourse of a democratic society (Schwandt, 2007).

A second characteristic of critical theory is that it emphasizes the importance of the integration of theory and practice. On this basis, critical theory as a theory becomes practical and normative and not merely explanatory and descriptive. Critical approaches have dual aims and methods as to how we read the social world. They are both explanatory and normative, meaning that they are seen as adequate empirical descriptions of the social context and as practical proposals for social science (Bohman, 2003). This corresponds with Horkheimer's argument that an adequate critical theory 'must explain what is wrong with current social reality, identify the actors to

change it and provide clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation' (cited in Bohman, 2005). Additionally, critical theory is prescriptive and normative in Fay's judgment, entailing a view of how humans should behave in a social democracy (cited in Cohen et al., 2010). Critical theory realizes a society that is equal and democratic for all its members. 'It holds up to the lights of legitimacy and equality issues of repression, voice, ideology, power, participation, representation, inclusion and interests' (ibid, p. 26).

Thirdly, the method it employs is that of immanent critique. Carr and Kemmis write that critical theory is the product of a process of critique. This statement reveals two ideas that complement each other, namely that the method it employs is that of critique and that through critique critical theories are formatted. Through critique, the aspects of the social order over which individuals do not control and which frustrate rational change are identified and exposed (1986). The notion of critique in critical theory as Kemmis puts it is the exploration of 'existing conditions' (Marx, 1967) to find how particular perspectives, social structures or practices may be irrational, unjust, alienating or inhumane' (2008, p. 125).

Marcuse's Critical Theory

There are many critical theories, not just one as Kincheloe and McLaren argue, as the critical tradition is in constant evolution since its first appearance (2005). For this reason, in speaking about critical theory one

must be careful, as critical theory comprises individual thinkers that have not conformed in all matters (Rush, 2004).

I will follow Marcuse's critical theory as I think that his ideas resonate with this thesis and what I was arguing earlier on drama/theatre education's promise for utopian enactments. For Marcuse, critical theory is identified by a concern with human happiness which depends 'on the transformation of the material conditions of existence' and by a concern with 'the potentialities of man and with the individual's freedom, happiness and rights,' where freedom appears to be a 'social relation on whose realization human destiny depends'. Through the transformation of previous material conditions of life, transformation in terms of liberation of human relations can be achieved (Marcuse 1968 cited in Feenberg and Leiss, 2007, p.xxi). The point that differentiates Marcuse from other theorists of the Frankfurt School is the 'utopian spirit' that was key element in his theory. In his critical theory of society, he holds a '*negative*' utopia where there is the hope for a better future that is not manifested in existing conditions (ibid).

As Feenberg and Leiss argue, Marcuse believed in the power of art to infuse us with hope and to inspire us to find a way to a better future which lies in the present (2007, p. xxxiv). In his words:

'As a fundamental independent mental process, fantasy has a truth value of its own which corresponds to an experience of its own-namely the surmounting of the antagonistic human reality. Imagination envisions the reconciliation of the individual with the whole, of desire

with realization, of happiness with reason. While this harmony has been removed into utopia by the established reality principle, fantasy insists that it must and can become real, that behind the illusion lies knowledge' (Marcuse, 1955 cited in Feenberg and Leiss, 2007, p. xxviii).

Marcuse's ideas on utopia and fantasy sound very relevant to democracy and to what I was arguing earlier, about the promise of the art form of drama and theatre for utopian enactments in promoting democracy.

2.2.3 Critical theory and Critical Educational Research

Critical theory provides a philosophical basis for an orientation to social science. Critical social science, then, refers to all fields that study society and are strongly influenced by critical theory. Carr and Kemmis differentiate the notion of critical theory from that of critical social science. According to them the idea of a critical social science was formulated by Habermas in order to extricate critical theories from the criticism targeted on their inability to change practice in the world, even though they can succeed in a transformation of consciousness (1986).

Social science that is characterized as critical is human, social and political. In Carr and Kemmis's words:

it is human in the sense that it involves active knowing by those involved in the practice of social life and it is social in the sense that it influences practice through the dynamic social process of communication and interaction. Inevitably then, social science is political: what is done depends on the way social processes of knowing and doing and particular situations are controlled' (1986, p. 146).

This is commensurate with critical education as a branch of critical social science and in particular what is of interest here namely critical educational research.

Horkheimer discusses the fact that critical theory and research are never satisfied only with increasing knowledge (cited in Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005). Thus for them research becomes an endeavour that is transformative and in this it is political (ibid). Carspecken and Apple agree with this by saying that the critical approach to research is characterized as such by the motivation of the researcher and the questions that are asked. In this, research becomes a 'political' project (1992).

In general, critical epistemologies for educational research direct their attention at three parameters; they validate situated knowledge, they undermine the *view from nowhere* objectivism and they consider the knower and the known as intimately connected (Lemesianou and Grinberg, 2006).

2.2.4 Re-conceptualizations: Knowledge and Power

Critical theory is never static, rather it is constantly changing in connection with new theoretical insights, new problems and social circumstances (Kincheloe and McLaren, 2005). Kincheloe and McLaren for example offer their view of critical theory in the new millennium in which they reject economic determinism and instead centre their attention on other concepts - the media, culture, language, power, desire, critical enlightenment and emancipation to talk about societies and democracy (ibid and Guba and Lincoln, 2005).

My major source for my arguments about critical theory for educational research has been drawn from the Frankfurt School tradition. In keeping pace with the changes in identities and contexts since critical theory's first appearance, I would like, though, to focus on one concept; the concept of power as it is developed through the work of Michel Foucault in order to offer a view of knowledge.

As Popkewitz comments, critical theories that range from Marxism to feminist postmodern have held the belief that knowledge is a political practice. But political practice is not only translated as conventional wisdom about having knowledge so as to participate more wisely in society. Knowledge can also be the force that regulates 'what is seen, felt through and talked as the possibilities of action, participation and reflection' (Popkewitz (b), 1999, p.35). The relationship that the above argument about knowledge has with power is one informed by 'post-discourses' and centres on 'how knowledge is disciplining and regulating of the person rather than only-repressive-what

Foucault called ‘the effects of power’” (Popkewitz (a), 1999, p.4). In other words, Foucault’s analysis of power leads to a re-thinking of power as something not negative, rather as something that produces and is exercised (Bueno Fischer, 2009).

In his essay on ‘The Subject and Power’ Foucault explains that the term ‘power’ indicates relationships between partners. Therefore one must talk not of power but of power relations (Foucault, 1982). He goes even further to say that power is not merely a relationship between partners; instead it acts upon people’s actions. It is about actions upon actions - either on existing actions or on those that may come in the future (Foucault, 1982, Troulinou, in Foucault, 1991). In Foucault’s words:

‘in itself the exercise of power is not violence. Nor is it a consent which implicitly is renewable. It is a total structure of actions brought to bear upon possible actions; it incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; in the extreme it constrains or forbids absolutely. It is nevertheless always a way of acting upon an acting subject or acting subjects by virtue of their acting or being capable of actions. A set of actions upon other actions’ (1982, p. 789).

This analysis of the concept of ‘power’ entails an important idea as to how power and its effects could be seen as productive rather than as repressive. Studying the effects of power can provide a lens through which we can explain how individuals construct boundaries and possibilities and especially

identify 'the systems of ideas that normalize and construct the rules through which intent and purpose are constructed in action...The effects of power are to be found in the production of desire and in dispositions and sensitivities of individuals' (Popkewitz, 1999, p.6).

In short, Foucault views power as disciplining people, as something that guides people to 'reason' about the world and themselves as they act and participate in that world (Popkewitz, 1999). The power issue is a complex and subtle web that agitates, as Rosa Maria Bueno Fischer writes, 'other webs of discourses, knowledge and daily and institutional, practices-which are in turn related with the production and circulation of truths.'(2009, p. 209)

2.3 On methodology

Presumably enough the choice of critical theory as the epistemological basis of the research directs towards more critical approaches on methodology. The methodologies that enlist the critical theory tradition are according to Cohen et al. ideology critique and action research (2010). I have chosen to follow the methodology of action research. In Scott and Usher's explication, an orientation towards change or improvement of practice does not necessarily prove a critical orientation. This specific study, though, is critically oriented because it falls within the tradition of action research that, through its focus on improving practice, challenges traditions like the theory-practice distinction and the subjectivity-objectivity dualism (2011).

2.3.1 Action Research: Definitions

The reasons for this choice, an analysis of its character, its relationship to critical theory as well as its strengths and weaknesses always in relation to the subject that this project is dealing with are the themes that I will analyze in the following sections.

Action research has gained considerable ground in recent years as a research methodology in its own right and literature around the topic has grown substantially which makes it difficult to form a definition of the term that will be inclusive of all the different trends and formats it can include. A very comprehensive definition is one given by Bradbury and Reason, who write that 'action research is a family of practices of living inquiry, that aims in a great variety of ways, to link practice and ideas in the service of human flourishing. It is not so much a methodology as an orientation to inquiry' (2008, p.1). It is an umbrella term for a variety of practical and intellectual efforts for change (Lai Fong Chiu cited in Bradbury and Reason, 2008).

Carr and Kemmis writing extensively on action research mention that 'it is simply a form of enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of those practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out (1986, p. 162). They acknowledge in their definition that the inquiry concerns not only the practices as such but an understanding of the larger historical, political and ideological contexts that structure human activity (Somekh, 2006). Kemmis elsewhere analyses further this idea that within the specific methodology of action research especially, and the educational

sciences generally, we do not only address practices as a matter of the behavioural or intentional action of individuals but we also grapple with the ways those practices are constructed socially and retained by cultural-discursive, social, material-economic forces that define the spheres in which the researchers inquire (2008). An acknowledgement of this is important for a study such as this one which aims to explore alternative practices and the circumstances under which these could occur in educational contexts.

2.3.2 The character of action research

Every research design that enjoys the term action research is classified as such by four defining characteristics according to Denscombe (2007). These characteristics in my opinion capture the essence of what it means to do action research, attributes that in the early stages of my studies as a Masters student I found inspiring and motivating.

First of all, one distinctive feature of action research is its practical orientation. It is essentially practical, applied research (Denscombe, 2007). The practical ethos of action research steers the researcher to grapple with practical, real-world problems. Indeed it is a form of research which is concerned with the development of 'practical knowing in the pursuit of worthwhile human purposes'. The relationship between action and reflection, theory and practice, benefits the development of practical solutions to issues of 'pressing concern to people and...their communities' (Bradbury and Reason, 2001, p. 1). As a complex, living process it primarily focuses on the production of practical knowledge that will be useful to people in their

everyday lives (ibid). In reference to the democratic sensibilities of this project the production of practical knowledge through action research is valuable as democracy as an idea should be communicated and experienced.

What distinguishes action research is that it moves a step further from research within the interpretative tradition as it is concerned not only with understanding the world but also with changing it. Pine talking specifically within the tradition of teacher action research recognizes this orientation of action research towards transformation. For him action research is 'change research' that aims to 'achieve concrete change' in a specific situation, context or setting so as to improve teaching and learning (2009, p. 31). Before analyzing further the forms that change can take in action research I would like to elaborate on the term. Change is an inevitable and continuous process in social settings, not only locally but globally as well (Somekh, 2006). At the same time, change is sometimes associated with a problem that needs to be solved. This is not necessarily the case, as the need for change does not always suggest a negative state but could also mean trying out something new, or improving the present state. The idea of action research as problem – solving is problematic as it starts from a view of problems as pathologies and action research is not only problem-solving but also problem-posing (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992).

In the case of action research, where there is a deliberate attempt for change, the problem is to understand what kinds of things the change involves and the extent to which we can control its direction (Somekh, 2006). In this specific project, I have employed action research looking at the practice of drama/theatre in education and its role in promoting democracy in order to

find out more about it, and eventually act in ways that might be better or more effective (Coberg and McCutcheon cited in Edmiston and Wilhelm, 1996).

Thirdly, another feature of action research is its cyclical process. Lewin talks about four key principles: planning, acting, observing and reflecting when action researching (undated). In different words, Dickens and Watkins affirm the same idea, that action research is an iterative cycle of problem identification, diagnosis, planning, intervention and evaluation of the results of action that lead to learning and planning further interventions (cited in Cassell and Johnson, 2006).

Last but not least is action research's commitment to the involvement of the people affected by the research both in its design and implementation. Bradbury and Reason add that action research is a practice of participation that engages the people that otherwise would be the subjects of the research or the recipients of intervention 'as inquiring co-researchers' to different levels every time.' (2008, p.1) In particular, educational action research allows the pupils to be to a certain extent 'active agents' and not simply 'participant observers' (Bryant cited in Macintyre, 2000, p.xii). The involvement of the students in the research process was something desirable from the very beginning in this project, as involvement could be a potential means for them to gain responsibility and ownership of the research. Especially I sought to promote participation through the participants' involvement in creating and developing an *aesthetic community* that will affect to a certain level the course of research.

Involvement of the participants is an opportunity for a further democratization of knowledge. This research project provided an opportunity

for me to consider ways in which power can be shared and this sharing is also a commitment to democracy and respect for the knowledge and the abilities of the people who have a stake in the research, as Grant et al. inform us (2008). The latter refer to 'participatory action research' when talking about the necessity of being reflexive about power, sources and needs but the same is true for action research in any form that it takes.

2.3.3 Action Research and Drama/Theatre Education: Convergences

Action Research is complex and multifaceted. Its different versions vary not only in process but also in purpose when seen in relation to the history and possibilities of the different contexts in which it is employed and in relation to the interests, ethics and commitments of all the people involved in the research (Noffke cited in Noffke and Brennan, 1997). If traditional educational action research is about the teacher of the classroom being the researcher of his or her own practice, my own inquiry differs from this model. I was not an 'insider' in the setting I would research into but rather an 'outsider' working with the teachers' agendas. However, I stand in the same line with traditional action research as I was interested in my own practice and professional development.

The choice of action research was based on my opinion that there are convergences between the two methodologies, namely drama/theatre and action research. I will now analyze the common elements between drama/theatre methodology and action research in order to support my methodological choice.

An element of 'experimentation' – or, better, 'exploration' - is a quality of both drama and action research. They are both ways of exploring possible futures. Drama changes reality in order to investigate it and the same thing can be said about the nature of action research, namely that interventions of action research transform reality so as to investigate it, as Kemmis and McTaggart argue (2000 cited in Kemmis, 2008). More explicitly, action research could be a means of understanding the world and becoming experienced in order to act more wisely in the future and as Kemmis argues, potentially transforming the world and ourselves in it (2008). I will provide a further analysis of this argument about the place of action research in the making of the world elsewhere. In examining their own practices, action researchers could find 'new ideas for practice and praxis (sayings), new ways of doing things (doings) and new kinds of relationships between those involved (relatings)' (2010, p.420). Kemmis's description is based on Hadot's of the purpose of ancient philosophy; that is, to help us live a 'logic', a 'physics' and 'an ethics' and he parallels it with the aim of action research which 'as a practice (Kemmis, 2009), is itself constructed in a logic, a physics and an ethics-ways of saying and understanding action research, ways of doing it and ways of relating to others in the process' (ibid, p.420).

On that basis, I will argue about another quality that drama/theatre and action research hold in common. They are potentially meta-practices. A meta-practice is a practice that changes other practices (Kemmis, 2009). The dialectic of action-reflection is where action research stands for potentially functioning as a meta-practice. Analytically, action researchers distinguish between practice that is habitual and customary and praxis that is informed,

committed action. Praxis is the action taken in action research (Carr and Kemmis, 1986). Action becomes praxis because of reflection. Noffke interprets praxis as 'the practical implications of critical thought, the continuous interplay between doing something and revising our thought about what ought to be done' (cited in Somekh, 2006, p.13). As when participating in drama we act within the roles we play and in or out of role we can reflect upon our actions with the potential of changing those actions the same is possible for action research. As with drama/theatre, action research is potentially a practice-changing practice as it aims at changing 'people's patterns of 'saying', 'doing' and 'relating' to form new patterns-new ways of life' (Kemmis, 2009, p.463).

Pine writes that an 'epistemology of practice' is necessary in the educational field that acknowledges the different ways people learn, and that takes into consideration the broader context of the school and the circumstances of teacher practice: 'uncertainty, uniqueness, complexity, conflict and change' (2009, p. 25). Drama/Theatre education and action research are both practices that consolidate those elements and an exemplification of this is the importance they both pay to the process of inquiry. For action research, as a living practice, the process can be as important as specific outcomes (Bradbury and Reason, 2001). Drama is, too, a living process and, for the aims of this project, the drama process development rests on participants' choices and interests and it cannot be pre-determined. Allied to this is the involvement of the participants in the process of both drama and action research. Involvement, as I have argued earlier, is a

core feature if research takes the name action research and drama cannot happen if there is no willing participation of the members.

There were other important reasons that led me to the choice of action research. In particular the opportunity that it offers to choose a relevant, timely topic to research into (Macintyre, 2000). The aspirations of this study with its emphasis on human flourishing as its ultimate outcome (Lincoln and Denzin 2000 cited in Titchen and Manley, 2006) correlates with the aims of action research. The democratic aspirations of this study and action research's aim to model democratic relations between people and the exploration of new ways of doing things, new ways of thinking and new ways of relating to others and the world (Kemmis, 2010) could potentially affirm each other. Thus there is nothing more relevant to this study than a 'democratic form of research' (Elvero cited in Scott and Usher, 2011, p.36).

In an earlier chapter, I discussed the concept of being and its situatedness through analyses on the body from different perspectives, with the aim of examining the relation of action to knowing. Action research could further this examination on the practical level as it includes in its attitude a recognizing of our embodied nature in a social and ecological order and of our interconnection with other beings (Bradbury and Reason, 2008). If the self is socially constructed and multiple, then research has not only to acknowledge this but also to stand on this for any interpretations. Action research is in accord with these postmodern notions about the self because of its flexible nature, one that allows for alternative ways of doing research (Scott and Usher, 2011). The possibility for alternative ways to research and the use of different methods that this discloses is relevant and powerful for this specific

study as it coheres with arts-informed methodology, an additional methodological choice that I will discuss later.

2.3.4 Criticisms and Limitations

It would be an omission not to mention criticisms of action research. In any case, criticism and the capability to be able to respond to that is an immanent characteristic of its nature as researchers review their practice in light of the critical judgments of others. Research requires 'a research culture, an atmosphere' in which criticism will be welcomed and not avoided and a 'forum' where other researchers, or theorists or participants can examine the conclusions based on evidence (Pring, 2000, p.135). Especially for research into practice, any active reflection on practice aiming at its improvement must be public, meaning that the research must be conducted in such a way that other people can scrutinize and question it.

A common position of many of its critics concerns generalizability. Action research is accused very often of paying attention to the particular as it happens in a specific setting with specific people, to a specific issue, to the extent that its results cannot be generalizable. On this criticism two scholars, Pring and Somekh have both commented. Pring argues that indeed action research focuses on the particular but no one situation is unique in all its aspects therefore action research in one context can be illuminative or suggestive of practice in other contexts. He also adds that in the case of research into practice, it is risky to go into the dilemma of generalization or specificity as there is a middle way. 'Educational practices are conducted or engaged in within societies of shared values and understandings. And there

are generalizations about how people are motivated and learn, however tentative these must be and in need of testing in the circumstances of particular classrooms' (2000, p. 138-139). Somekh from her position argues that it is no longer possible to establish truths that can be generalizable in different contexts and thus a methodology that creates contextualized knowledge cannot be disadvantageous. The idea is for action research to be cautious in the claims it makes, sensitive to variations and open to new interpretations in different contexts (Somekh, 2006).

Action research has been also charged with not being 'objective'. Instead, for some critics, it is biased as it is about the researcher researching his or her practice and its findings are liable to be unreliable due to self-deception or the ideological distortions of the participants. Carr and Kemmis have replied to this saying that there is never a value free or neutral way to describe practice and that 'any science of human praxis must embody values and interests both as objects of inquiry and as knowledge –constitutive interests for the science itself' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p. 193). As Griffiths argues, bias comes not from having ethical and political positions, as this is inevitable, but from not acknowledging them (1998). The way to stand against this argument is to learn to harness the power of critical self-reflection in order to expose self-interests and ideological distortions (Carr and Kemmis, 1986).

Criticism also centres on the conviction that an emancipatory intent of critical action research does not guarantee an emancipatory outcome (Acker et al. in Cassell and Johnson, 2006). Cassel and Johnson follow Marcuse's understanding that there is a danger that under the guise of democratic communication the more powerful may deploy a rhetoric of democracy and

impose in this way their own preferences, silencing the less powerful in the process. They refer to participatory approaches in action research where this becomes troubling if one considers 'the difficulty in ensuring that what is taken as a form of consensus about aims and desired outcomes isn't the distorted product of power relations' (2006, p. 809).

Grant, Nelson and Mitchel also explain that even with participatory forms of inquiry, power relations within the research relationship are not erased but only eliminated (2008) and this is something that has to be acknowledged. Power is not something that can be dispersed or re-arranged simply by rationality (Cohen et al., 2010). A distribution of power presupposes something more than a change in the practices. It also presupposes a change in the understanding of those practices and the situations where these practices take place (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1992) where this might mean a change at the institutional level. Overall, this is a challenge that action researchers have to face, namely to move beyond an ostensible dispersion of power and make sure that at the end is not an agenda that is as controlling as those agendas that it seeks to attack (Morrison cited in Cohen et al., 2010). I will later refer further to the way I myself affected the research and how it has been read by my critical friend.

In summing up, I will refer to Vennesson, who writes about case study stating that, as with every other approach, it can have its limits and can be done well or poorly and the same is true for action research. Researchers must be cognizant of the theoretical and methodological assumptions embedded in the practice of any research approach and make full use of the methodology they are following (Vennesson, 2008).

2.4 Arts-Informed Research Methodology

In parallel to action research methodology, I have also chosen to employ an arts-informed methodology. I employed this as a methodology and not as a method within action research methodology as I aimed to follow more than one artistic practice within the drama process, including drama conventions, embodied presentations, improvisations and visual methods like drawings and video-recordings. Furthermore, those artful practices would serve not merely for data collection but for other phases of the research process too.

Before explaining more about the aims and potential of arts-informed research I would like to discuss the differences between arts-based and arts-informed research. John O'Toole explains arts-based research as a methodology which entails the creation of a piece of artwork and the use of that process to examine a research question. The result consists of the artwork accompanied by commentary. While arts-based enquiry is about art-making to investigate, arts-informed enquiry 'is a form of illumination and reflexive learning, a research tool rather than a foundation and outcome of research' (O' Toole, 2006, p.59).

Literature on arts-based research highlights the need for artistic skill on the part of the researcher. The researcher is also an artist himself/herself or works along with an artist or artists in order to complete the research act (see Cancienne and Snowber, 2003, Leavy, 2009). At the same time, the artistic work must be highly crafted in order for research to be considered as arts-based. In any case the finished piece of research could be also able to stand on its own as a piece of art (Leavy, 2009).

Arts-informed research on the other hand, as O'Toole comments on it in the context of drama education, involves the drama educators and their students in the making of dramatic art-works and reflection on the work, both artistically and pedagogically (O'Toole, 2006). In this research I employed an arts-informed methodology as I was not an artist myself and neither did I collaborate with an artist or artists. Alternatively, during the drama work in the research site, the participants were encouraged to work as artists through different performance modes such as drawing, improvisation or video-recording and this was intended to serve the aims of the research and be valuable in terms of data collection, analysis or representation. The aim was not the production of fine art works but the advancement of knowledge through the imaginative qualities of the arts (Knowles and Cole, 2008).

In reviewing the literature, little theoretical work exists on arts-based research and even less on arts-informed research. I will use references for arts-based inquiry to talk about arts-informed inquiry as, even if the two methodologies differ, the qualities of the arts that either enquiry is based on or informed by are the same; therefore much of what is said about arts-based research is relevant to arts-informed research. In describing arts-informed research I will follow Cole and Knowles who define it 'as a mode and form of qualitative research that is influenced by, but not based in, the arts broadly conceived'. The methodology of arts-informed research infuses qualities mainly from the visual and performing arts with the aim of 'enhancing understanding of the human condition through alternative processes and representational forms of inquiry' (2008, p.59).

Arts-infused research is original and innovative, disrupting and extending the qualitative paradigm (Leavy, 2009) and a way to 're-enchant research' (Gablik 1991 in Knowles and Cole, 2008, p.60). As well as being non-conventional and offering alternatives to traditional research, there are important reasons for employing arts-informed research. Firstly, as employed here it merges with action research methodology as it involves the participants in the research process. Methods involved in arts-informed methodology image action research methods where the participants follow the dialectic of action-reflection. In adapting the tenets of the arts, the practices that participants are encouraged to follow involve reflection, action, description, exploration, problem identification, hypothesis testing and so on.

Moreover, the participants communicate and convey meaning through symbolism, metaphor and imagination. The potentially evocative, captivating, moving and aesthetically powerful artistic practices (Leavy, 2009), can serve to engage the participants more deeply in the research process. McNiff's argument about artistic expression as being essentially heuristic, introspective and deeply personal is supportive of the above (2008). As Gallagher comments, art helps to rethink the social of social science research while offering alternatives for shifts in engagement and reframing the terms of engagement (2008).

Another reason for employing arts-informed methodology, concerns the convergence with the focus on the body of this study. This is more understandable if one considers arts-informed methodology as an *embodied* methodology. The term artistic practices, instead of artistic methods, that the students are invited to follow is more preferable as it evinces their source on

the person, on the body. Eisner comments that arts use forms of communication that do more than tell; they show (Eisner, 2001) and elsewhere he comments especially on visual art by saying that visual research teaches us that seeing is central to making (cited in Finley and Knowles, 1995). Based on Eisner, then, these practices as informed by the arts can be considered as bodily-based and the body as a site of knowledge (Abram cited in Cancienne and Snowber, 2003) and a locus of discovery (Harper cited in Cancienne and Snowber, 2003). Arts-based research 'is particularly well suited for understanding and demystifying the human relationships that enhance learning' (Cahmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, 2007, p.244). Thus in understanding the kind of relationships that enhance learning through this unique kind of research we can potentially engage students in deep learning that relates with personal agency (ibid).

Finally, as Leavy comments about arts-based practices, these methodologies are useful for research projects oriented towards descriptions, explorations and discoveries as they are more regardful of processes (2009). Barone and Eisner add to this by saying that the purpose of arts-based research is to enhance perspectives and not adhere to certainty. They underline its *illuminative effects*, its *generativity*, in the sense of promoting questions and its *incisiveness*, that is the ability to centre on what is educationally salient and its *generalizability* (2006, p. 102). In relation to how *generalizability* is defined in arts-based inquiries, the latter seems to agree with Cahmann-Taylor and Siegesmund, who explain that traditional generalizability does not apply here. Rather arts-based research is generalizable if it manages to start conversations and pose further questions

about the particular (2007). All these sound very relevant to this project that aims not at proving and concluding but at illustrating how a specific approach to drama teaching might promote democracy.

2.5 Strategies for gathering the data

2.5.1 Unstructured and Participant observations

Observation is considered by many to be one of the most important methods of data collection (Somekh and Jones, 2011). Angrosino cites Adler's and Adler's characterization of observation as the 'fundamental base of all research methods' in the social sciences (Angrosino, 2005, p. 729).

A reason that I employed this method for data gathering is the opportunity it provides to the researcher to collect 'live' data as they take place in the social setting (Cohen, et al., 2010, p.397), where the data are gathered rather easily as the key instrument in every observation is the self (Denscombe, 2007).

A dynamic element about observation is that it is possible to collect data of different kinds. Newby defines these as context data that relate to the setting, data about behaviour that includes actions of one or more people in the research group, data about verbal interaction, namely the communicative patterns and the content of communication, and presentational data about the way people present themselves to the outside world (2010). What this shows is that through observation it is possible to generate multidimensional data about social interaction in specific contexts (Mason, 2002). This is in accord with this research's focus on the embodied self.

Observation was also an indispensable choice as observing is one of the necessary steps in completing the action research cycles. In every action research cycle the researcher plans, acts, observes, reflects. Observation is a necessary stage that precedes planning and re-planning. Mason states that researchers who choose observation are likely to conceptualize themselves 'as active and reflexive in the research process' (2002, p.86) and that affirms what Newby says about observation as an emergent procedure, based on discovery where nothing is pre-determined (2010).

In this fieldwork I chose to observe both as participant and non-participant. In other words I employed participant observation and unstructured observation methods. Participant observation entails the immersion of the researcher in the research setting, and his or her participation in the activities happening in that setting so as to gain insights into the behaviour and activities of the people observed (Somekh and Jones, 2011). Because I have not been the teacher or a member of the schools, participant observation was an opportunity to gain insights into the situations and events (Denscombe, 2007). Conjointly, participant observation was a way to get to the details, the subtleties, the complexity and the interconnectedness of the social world because of its focus on depth rather than breadth which is important in relation to validity issues (ibid).

Unstructured observation is a suitable choice for the researcher who enters the research field without knowing much about its subjects as was my own case. Here the researcher is more 'passive' going into the situation without being systematic in his or her observations in the sense of completing observational schedules with set categories of what to observe. Unstructured

observation leaves space for a reviewing of the observational data before giving explanations. Therefore it is responsive to what it finds and selective to the situation (Cohen, et al., 2010).

However, observation is not without its limitations. Because of the complexity of human behaviour and the impossibility of recording all the impressions, observation has to be selective (Somekh and Jones, 2011). Observers have to make choices about what to observe. Attached to this is the issue of subjectivity. The perspective of the researcher on what is observed and how he or she makes meaning of it is critical (Lichtman, 2010). Therefore issues of unreliability are raised if every observation is the product of the researcher's perception. What is observed is ontologically determined in Somekh and Jones's statement, meaning that it depends greatly on how the person who observes understands the world and his or her place in it (2011).

For Newby, there is always the problem of bias in observation because even if we don't participate in what is happening, the fact that we are present affects it (2010). Particularly for participant observation Mason explains that researchers have to be very careful in making claims of 'empathizing' or 'knowing the others' simply because of participating in their activities. The same is true of the claims we make concerning the extent that participating in those activities means also being in the same position or having the same perspective as others in the setting (Mason, 2002, p. 92).

In order to decrease to the least any undesirable effects and attending to issues of reliability, I used observations as part of a multi-method approach

to research complementing it with a research diary that I kept, video-recordings and reviews of the data from a critical friend so as to provide another perspective.

Finally, observation relates to this specific study with its emphasis on the presence and action. Observation is an embodied method of researching (Mason, 2002) where the researcher uses all his or her senses to record what is happening. This acknowledgement allows a shift from observation per se to a perspective that emphasizes observation as a context for interaction with the people involved (Angrosino, 2005).

2.5.2 Research Journal

Being an observer both participant and non-participant brought forward the issue of note-taking. The form this note-taking would take was something I had to think about before I embarked on the fieldwork.

Altrichter et al. point to the research journal as a good place to record notes from unstructured observation and to record the researcher's own behaviour as a participant observer. It facilitates observation, documentation and reflection (2005). Journal writing would thereby complement the work done with observations and would function as a research companion throughout the whole fieldwork process where I could note everything from short memos, occasional observations, interpretive ideas and reflections that otherwise would be lost (Altrichter and Holly, 2011). It could provide a

permanent account of all the aspects of the research process to which I could return at any moment (Borg, 2001) generating a history of the whole project.

Keeping and using a research journal is a method that is simpler and much easier to organize than other research methods, interviews for example (Altrichter, et al., 2005). The privacy that it offers, and the fact that you don't need to regard issues of style and punctuation (ibid) impart a sense of freedom in writing and the opportunity to write uninterrupted and focused (Janesick, 1995). Journal writing happens in the researcher's own time and place and thus it is easy to be incorporated throughout the whole research process.

It is used as an aide-memoire (McNiff et al., 1996) to remind the researcher of past ideas and events and guide subsequent action; or to record plans for subsequent evaluation (Borg, 2001), as a time-line for the fieldwork with notes about dates, time and contexts to allow for a more detailed write-up of the study (McNiff, et al., 1996) and it facilitates reflection and ongoing analysis if maintained systematically. In relation to action research and the inquiring of my own practice, this quality is paramount. By marking down information such as observations and interpretations, reactions and feelings, the journal can ensure that data collection and analysis are concurrent procedures (Altrichter, et al., 2005) which signifies a commitment to the principals of action research - where reflection and analysis happen throughout the process and not after the work in the field has finished - lead to theoretical discoveries or changes in method.

Even though the research journal is considered as a powerful heuristic tool and research technique (Janesick, 1995) little is written on its value. Recent literature in the field includes journals which run on issues of reflexivity in qualitative research through reflective-journal writing (see for example Ortlipp, 2008, Nadin and Cassel, 2006). Beyond the fact that the research journal can be an effective way for both reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action, it could also be a potent means for critical self-reflection. Provided that there is a prior awareness of the nature of reflective writing and an eagerness for adopting a reflective stance (Borg, 2001) the research journal can be a mirror you reflect upon to address the researcher's self, recognizing the self as the primary research instrument (Janesick, 1995). This is particularly apt for research situated in the critical tradition like the present study. Studies within the critical paradigm are interested in examining the way 'the researcher's own experiences, values and positions of privilege in various hierarchies have influenced their research interests, the way they choose to do their research, and the ways they choose to represent their research findings' (Harrison et al. cited in Ortlipp, 2008, p. 697). The research journal can be used as a means for self-expression, self-exploration and self-analysis (Burgess, 1989) and as the basis for reflective practice (Holly, 1989). The researcher can draw on the journal to disclose his or her history, values and assumptions and make them open to scrutiny, in order not to control bias but to make it visible to the readers (Scheurich cited in Ortlipp, 2008).

2.5.3 Visual Methods

Although visually oriented educational research is relatively new to qualitative research, (Prosser, 2000) there is a spectrum of methodological approaches to the use of the visual in qualitative research, a fact that demands some explanation of how the visual is used in the process of research (Given, 2008). For Given, visual research and mainly pictures can be used as a source of data, as a method of data analysis and as a means of data representation (2008). As visual research involves still and moving images of many kinds, I will restrict this section to include only video-recordings and photographs taken during the research process by myself and the teachers of the students. Visual research includes other kinds of visual data, like drawings and video-recordings from the participants. I was also interested to include these in my research and will discuss them in a subsequent section under the title arts-informed research.

Visual data should be thought of not as the records of the camera but as what can be seen with the eyes. The term visual data thereby, 'potentially encompasses any object, person, place, event, or happening which is observable to the human eye' where the word potentially manifests that the data 'must be viewed, understood or placed in some analytical framework before they are regarded as data' (Emmison and Smith, 2000). This is supported by Pole who argues that the mere existence of the visual, namely the collection or display of visual images, does not necessarily constitute research (Pole, 2004).

My own use of the visual medium as a source of data was to complement other methods. At the same time, as I was participant observer along with my teaching, it was neither possible nor desirable to dedicate a lot of time to video-recording or to taking photographs as that would be distracting both for myself and the students. In this, a digital camera would stand on a tripod and act as a silent observer recording what was happening (Harel 1991 cited in Paterson et al. 2003).

The method of video-recording as an observational strategy is also discussed by Paterson et al. who propose the blending of two observational methods, namely participant observation and video-recording to address the limitations and extend the purposes of each (2003). The use of the video-camera in the classroom was intended to add breadth and depth to participant observations by providing access to data that as participant observer I was not able to obtain and supplement the field notes with details that would not be perceived during observations (ibid). The use of the video-camera would be used to produce an 'observational film' of the research site, simple in its production and 'far removed from the pressure of documentary and journalistic enterprise and their compulsion for dramatic narrative' (Prosser, 2000, p.128-129).

Video-recording per se is useful in terms of increasing the precision of the fieldwork as recordings capture both actions and sounds (Yin, 2011) and for capturing the temporality of the event with great accuracy (Koshy, 2005). The video-recordings provide a permanent record of the research process where what is recorded can be retained and stored for later scrutiny. The actions can be frozen, slowed down, replayed or separated in time and place

and compared (Dant, 2004) and these capacities facilitate a level of analysis that is not possible through observation or still photography (Dant cited in Pole, 2004); for example, analyzing different aspects of the activity or reflecting on a previous analysis, or even observing the reactivity of the participants in the researcher's presence (Paterson et al., 2003).

Photographs would also be another method for data gathering, but their use would be more restricted than that of the video-recording. I aimed to involve the teachers of the students in taking pictures of what was happening in the site. Photograph taking has something peculiar about it, according to Harper, as it has the dual qualities of making a record of the world seemingly without interpreting it and at the same time this record is profoundly subjective (2004). A photographic image is a good record of what it captures but this record is always partial (Bennett cited in Prosser, 1998).

Finally the video produced during the research process and the photographs taken were the only medium through which the critical friend would have access to what was happening in the classroom. Especially the use of video as an observational strategy without commentary would provide a more *objective* rendering of the events as it would provide a reproduction of 'objects, places, signs, symbols or behavioral interactions' (Prosser, 2000, p.129).

In employing the methods of video-recording and photograph taking, one must think about the ethical implications that have to do with the reproducibility and the manipulations that digitization allows (Winston, 1998), the subjective nature of photograph taking and the power issues inherent in

that (Harper, 2004). Photographs will not appear in this study due to confidentiality promised to the participants and their parents.

2.6 Thematic Analysis as a Method to Analyze the Data

Collecting information does not mean producing data automatically. What each researcher does with the information collected is key, as it is through different forms of sense making that raw information becomes research data (Scott and Morrison, 2005). Qualitative analysis is then about transforming, converting raw data into research findings.

Quinn-Patton sees qualitative analysis as a new stage of fieldwork in which the researcher must observe his/her processes as the analysis is happening. In this, a necessary part of the analysis is to analyze and report on the analytical process as part of reporting on the findings which will be heavily shaped by the purpose and theoretical framework of the study (2002). The method I have chosen to follow to analyze my data is thematic analysis. Thematic analysis is defined as a process for encoding qualitative information that although widely-used is inadequately demarcated and not regularly acknowledged (Boyatzis, 1998). For some writers, thematic analysis is seen as a process to be used with other methods (see Boyatzis, 1998) while for others thematic analysis is seen as a method in its own right (see Braun and Clarke, 2006). This study falls within the second camp.

Thematic analysis is a way of seeing, a method for identifying, analyzing and reporting themes within the data and in which the data are

organized and described in rich detail. A theme can be anything that captures something important about the data in relation to the research question and represents a kind of patterned response or meaning in the data collected (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is the most suitable method to follow for the analysis of the data as it is not wedded to any pre-existing theoretical framework as other methods and thus it is easier to apply it across different theoretical and epistemological approaches (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The relevant theoretical freedom of this method allows me to develop themes in relation to the specific research question. This is very useful for a project such as this one which aims to research something in particular.

Boyatzis describes as a theme a pattern that can be found in the information collected that at minimum describes and organizes what is observed, what is seen in the data and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon. He states three approaches to developing themes systematically; these are themes that are theory driven, themes that are prior data or prior research driven and themes that are inductive, namely they emerge from the data themselves (1998).

As with this research project I wished to research something in particular, I followed the first of these three approaches, namely the approach in which the themes are theoretically informed. The theory under investigation guided the analysis. Braun and Clarke explain that theoretical thematic analysis is chosen over inductive analysis when you code for a quite specific research question, which is the case here. Thematic analysis is usually driven by the theoretical interest in the area and it is concerned not so much with the

rich description of the data overall but with analyzing in more detail some aspects of the data (2006).

Moreover, forming themes that reflect the theoretical context of the research relates to the action research methodology that I followed for collecting the data. In more detail, theoretically-informed themes for analysis are useful in dealing with the issue of reflexivity which arises from the use of action research. As the actions of the researcher influence that which is being researched, theoretical thematic analysis addresses the question about how far the data are created rather than collected (Hayes, 1998). In any case, the themes are particular ways of seeing, thinking and understanding our data.

Lastly, the foundation for every qualitative analysis and report is thick, rich description that can give readers a clear idea of the setting in which the research is conducted. Description is the first step towards analysis and must precede interpretation (Quinn-Patton, 2002). There are many options for reporting and organizing descriptive findings. I have chosen to follow a storytelling approach and specifically the flashback model in which I will present the story that illuminates the outcome of my research (ibid).

2.7 Issues of Validity and Reliability

While researchers agree that no research project is complete unless the researcher can show that the processes used ensure that the methods were reliable and the conclusions valid (Silverman, 2000), not all agree as to what counts as validity or reliability (Griffiths, 1998). In acknowledging the

importance but also the problematics of validity and reliability, I try to show what Clive Seale calls 'methodological awareness', namely, a commitment to showing the procedures and evidence that have led to the conclusions, bearing in mind that those can potentially change in light of new evidence (cited in Silverman, 2010, p. 274). For this reason I attend to issues of validity and reliability without making strong claims about them and focusing not on testing and verifying knowledge but on exploring and creatively generating the kind of new knowledge that this action research aims at (Kvale, 1995).

As a theoretical base for the discussion of validity I will use Kvale's approaches. Specifically Kvale, talking from within the context of postmodern conceptions of knowledge, proposes that validity should be assessed as investigation, communication and action. Validity as investigation or craftsmanship refers to the quality of craftsmanship in an investigation, calling for a continual checking, questioning and theoretical interpretation of findings. Validity as communication refers to validation of knowledge through dialogue and validity, as action refers to the effectiveness of knowledge as demonstrated by the effectiveness of action (Kvale, 1995). This last concept is particularly relevant to action research projects as the research moves beyond mere descriptions of the social world to include actions as different possibilities to the existing (ibid). Kvale's approach resonates with Winter's argument on validity as not a single, fixed or universal concept. On the contrary it is a contingent construct emanating from the processes and intentions of each methodology (Winter cited in Golafshani, 2003).

'Truth' is another word for validity (Silverman, 2010) while credibility and dependability are other words for reliability (Merriam, 2002). Reliability as

Merriam explains refers actually to the extent that the research findings can be replicated. This means that in case the research is repeated it should yield the same results. But in the context of social science this is problematic due to the non-static nature of human behaviour and the fact that there can be many interpretations of the same data. Reliability then refers to the consistency of the results with the data (ibid).

Although validity and reliability are different concepts, they are interlinked. For example, Patton states that reliability is a consequence of validity in a research study (cited in Golafshani, 2003). For this reason the same strategies for promoting validity and reliability are proposed (see Merriam, 2002). As validity is a matter of degree and not an absolute state (Gronlund, cited in Cohen et al., 2010), in striving to minimize invalidity and maximize validity (and in this reliability) I followed three strategies. These are triangulation, feedback from a critical friend and self-reflexivity.

Triangulation is one of the most common ways in which two or more vantage points or datasets are combined (Gorard and Taylor, 2004) to justify and underpin knowledge by gaining new knowledge (Flick, 2004). It is a valuable craft skill (Steinke, 2004) which provides 'evidence –whether convergent, inconsistent or contradictory- such that the researcher can construct good explanations of the social phenomena from which they arise' (Mathison, 1988, p.15). I consider triangulation as being of central value in search for validation, even if some see it as a fallible path to validity (Silverman, 2010). I have employed triangulation mostly through the combination of data derived from different research methods, for instance combining data from my personal journal, visual data from video-recordings

and through observations and suggestions made from my critical friend. The datasets were viewed as being of equal value and not the one central and the other preliminary (Flick, 2004) in trying to eliminate bias and add breadth and depth to the analysis of findings.

An additional strategy for enhancing the validity and reliability followed was the feedback from a critical friend during the research process. Peer examination or peer debriefing is in other words what the critical friend does. I prefer to use the term critical friend, as the person who was the critical friend of my research was also my friend. I chose this person as a high level of trust had developed over time between us. This feeling of trust is a principal reason for choosing a critical friend as the discussions between researcher and critical friend function as risk-free forums to test ideas about emerging themes (Spall, 1998). The critical friend must be knowledgeable both of the area of study and of the relevant methodology and stimulate discussion about alternative approaches (Guba and Lincoln cited in Spall, 1998). My critical friend was a primary teacher and drama educator and conversant with the methodology used as she had followed an action research methodology herself for her PhD thesis.

The involvement of a critical friend in action research projects provides methodological warranty for the trustworthiness of the study (Koo, 2002) and in the cases where the researcher comes too close to the action, the critical friend can give a fresh perspective (McNiff and Whitehead, 2002). In this project, the critical friend was not involved in the initial research design, as at this point the drama schemes were discussed with my supervisor. She was involved in a later stage, during the data analysis. Her participation was

external in that her feedback came through the video-recordings that she observed, and her responses to the data collected. This kind of critical friendship, where the critical friend comes at a later point and takes the form of external conversation, is still thought of as very strengthening for a study, providing as it does alternative perspectives, support and protection from bias and self-delusion (Foulger, 2010).

Self-reflexivity was another procedure that was followed in addressing issues of validity and reliability. Literature repeatedly states the value and purpose of self-reflexivity. Self-reflexivity or reflected subjectivity as Steinke names it, is a procedure that 'tests the extent to which the foundational role of the researcher as a subject (with his/her research interests, assumptions, communicative styles and biographical background) and as a component of the social world that he or she is investigating, is incorporated into formation of the theory in a way that is as far as possible reflected in the methods' (Steinke, 2004, p.90). It is a kind of self-validation with the researcher self-disclosing assumptions, beliefs or biases that may shape the inquiry (Creswell and Miller, 2000).

I find it necessary to speak for my position as an outsider to the groups that I was researching into. Yet, in another conceptualization of insider-outsider relationships to research contexts, as Griffiths argues, no one is completely insider or outsider in educational settings; rather some people are relative insiders or relative outsiders in specific sites (1998). Following this idea, I was an outsider as I was not a staff member in any of the schools or organizations that I researched into but I was an insider as a teacher of the

Cypriot educational system and as a member of the community of drama/theatre education.

An action research study must also consider issues of generalizability, which is commonly referred to as external validity (Bryman, 2008). The researcher needs to emphasize that the project is applicable to other similar situations (Koshy, 2005) as non-generalizability is pointed to as action research's limitation. Generalizability is possible in action research methodology and commonly conceptualized as user generalizability, where readers determine the extent to which findings from one context can be applied to another (Merriam, 2002). A strategy that I followed for increasing generalizability is maximizing variation in the sample. This means that in selecting the sample, some diversity was allowed so that the findings of the study could be applied to more situations by users (ibid).

2.8 On ethics

Nixon and Sakes in their introductory chapter in the book *The Moral Foundations of Educational Research* aver that educational research is not just a matter of researching about education but research with educational purposes; therefore there is a need in explaining research method technically to make explicit also its rationale (Nixon and Sakes, 2003). Their argument brings to the fore the unavoidably ethical dimension of educational research. A discussion on ethics is pertinent to every research project as according to Inglis the meanings we make of educational research are indubitably moral matters (cited in Nixon and Sakes, 2003, p.4).

Ethics is usually associated with morality and both words relate to matters of right or wrong (Babbie, 2004). Antony Weston interprets ethics as being both about feeling and thinking, as that force that asks us to live mindfully and to take care about how we act and even how we feel. He distinguishes between ethics and morals and explains that there is a separation between the moral values we hold from the intentional process of examining, criticizing or revising them. 'Ethics has a more critical, self-conscious edge' (Weston, 2006, p.3). Thinking has a central role in ethics as the point of ethics is not to moralize or dictate our actions but to provide constructive ways to think about difficult matters and stresses the struggle and uncertainty that characterize both life, ergo ethics, as being an internal part of life (ibid).

2.8.1 The determinative role of the researcher

Hopf explains research ethics as those principles and rules which define the relationship with the researcher and those involved in the research (Hopf, 2004). However, this explanation manifesting the ethical responsibility of the researcher towards the participants is not inclusive enough as it disregards the fact that 'educational research is grounded epistemologically, in the moral foundations of educational practice' (Nixon and Sikes, 2003, p.2). What this means is that it neglects the 'moral deliberation' on the part of the researcher (Pring, 2003, p.56) which inexorably bounds the research from the very beginning. Richard Pring clarifies this argument better. In particular, he puts a query against the idea of thinking in terms of principles, rules and

codes in what concerns ethics, and suggests that it is wiser to think about the virtues of the researcher rather than the principles that he or she upholds. What is important in Pring's idea is that the ethical practice depends to a great extent on the dispositions of the researchers that guide their actions, in his words 'on the sort of people they are' (Pring, 2003, p.63).

The above ideas are evidential of the determinative role that the researcher has in every research practice and bring us to the issue of responsibility, where, for Anderson, responsibility for ethical research lies heavily on the researcher, who in the final analysis is the principal determinant of the ethical standards of the research (Anderson with Arsenault, 1998).

2.8.2 Traditional Ethics

Despite the fact that conformity to a code of ethics does not guarantee ethical practice (Nicholson, 2005) and that the conduct of responsible social science is dependent upon a life-long effort and commitment on the part of the researcher to act ethically, the desire for ethical practice should be tied with familiarity to the national and international regulations, ethics, codes and laws (Fisher in Fisher and Anushko, 2008). In other words, researchers in the social sciences need to be aware of the general agreement shared by researchers about what is appropriate and inappropriate in the conduct of the research.

Scholars have written extensively on research ethics in the social sciences. From my readings I have distinguished and I will refer to those principles that appeal to my own research project. The principle of informed consent lies at the heart of ethical practice involving issues of clarity of

purpose, trust, honesty and integrity (Lindsay, 2010). Ethical considerations, as Kelly explains, demand more than just information and consent. They demand informed consent, namely consent that accrues from a full understanding of what is involved (Kelly, 1989). Kelly also questions whether informed consent should be thought of in relation to other ethical considerations and not as the cardinal principle in research (ibid). What Kelly advocates is significant for this specific project that involves students of the age of 8-12 years old and this respectively generates two concerns; getting informed consent from 'gate-keepers' and from participants of this age.

There is often a difficulty in obtaining informed consent from children - the term not used here to denote disadvantageousness of any kind - where one or more adults have authority or responsibility for them (Simons and Piper, 2011). In involving young students in a research project the researcher needs the permission of one or more 'gate-keepers' (Lindsay, 2010) and in the case of Cyprus this would mean gaining permission from the local authority, which is the Ministry of Education and Culture; the person in charge of the institution, for example the head-teacher of the school; the teacher of the class; and finally the parents or guardians of each child. This means that students' participation depends mainly on adults who control the researcher's access and the children's opportunities to express their views (Masson, 2005). This would mean explaining the aims, negotiating and coming to terms with the 'gate-keepers'.

Even if competent adults provide consent for the children's participation, it is ethical to gain the children's consent as well (Lindsay, 2010). On the matter of considering the child as the principal consent-giver,

Leeson comments that it conceals problems and dangers that are not obvious (Leeson, 2007). I believe that her skepticism is justifiable, as in ensuring informed consent from children one must take into consideration many parameters like the age of the participants, their cognitive competence and the different understandings that they might bring to concepts such as harm. At the same time, information must be given clearly, simply and comprehensibly if the child will consent to his or her participation. In my case, because of the young age of the participants, oral explanation about the nature of the project and what was expected from them would be a better choice (Lindsay, 2010). In any case, being sensitive to how a researcher handles the issue of informed consent on the part of the child does not necessarily mean that the children are rendered vulnerable or powerless.

The principle of informed consent is interconnected with that of voluntary participation. It is necessary when we seek the consent of children to explain that they must not feel obliged to participate and that they have the right to withdraw at any time (Masson, 2005). Babbie argues that even if we accept that no-one should be forced to participate, it is easier to accept it in theory than to apply it in practice (Babbie, 2004), especially for participants who are captive in a group such as a school class (Anderson with Arsenault, 1998). This is something that researchers such as myself, who research in classroom contexts, must bear in mind.

In addition, informed consent and voluntary participation are principles that cohere with the nature of theatre. One of the four conditions of theatre according to Neelands is that theatre is by choice (2003). The precept that no

one should be forced to participate therefore is doubly important for this project.

The principle of confidentiality is a very important issue in its own right (Bryman, 2008). Confidentiality implies that the identity of the participants will not be disclosed and it is the researcher's responsibility to protect them (Masson, 2005). However, anonymity cannot be assured and what one has to keep in mind is that even when using pseudonyms and disguised locations they are very often recognized by insiders (Christians, 2000). Particularly in qualitative research that employs data generating methods such as participant observation, and research diaries which use narrative and details, this is a strong possibility.

I would like to refer to another issue that is recognized as crucial, the issue of no harm to participants. Harm must not be thought of in the extreme, for example as injury. Harming a participant means also disclosing information that would embarrass subjects or jeopardize their home lives, friendships or harm them psychologically (Babbie, 2004). This is also a concern that informs drama/theatre pedagogy. As in both fields there is a certain degree of exposure, it is imperative to take the necessary steps to protect the participants and ensure that the risks of negative consequences are minimized (Babbie, 2004). For this reason, I sought to talk about the students with the teachers so as to be more careful in the classroom.

2.8.3 Situated Ethics

Contemporary feminist and postmodern thinking and the increasing awareness of the complexity and instability of the educational environments have challenged the universalized nature of ethics and have posed questions about the possible situated nature of ethics (Simons and Usher, 2000). Simons and Piper talk about ethics in research as a situated practice, proposing that ethical decisions result from weighing different factors in the particular social and political situations in which we research. They analyze the term 'situated ethics' to acknowledge how ethical practice requires flexibility and sensitivity to the specific research context (2011, p. 27-28). The 'ethical moments' that we come across and the ethical decisions that have to be taken are both a function of applying ethical codes and principles and considerations of the particularities of each situation (Usher, 2000). Consequently the discussion on ethics cannot stop on traditional ethics but must involve thoughts on the ethical implications that relate to the democratic intentions of the study and to the employment of action research methodology.

The application of action research methodology per se raises issues because it intends to change, and as Barnes suggests, when advocating change, the values implicit have to be made explicit (cited in Kelly, 1989). What are the rights to intervene and what kind of change is advocated are questions that have to be answered and vindicated because, as Johnston forewarns, the danger of imposing another 'regime of truth' through ethically and politically committed forms of research is discernible (cited in Usher and Simons, 2000).

Change implies values, but the values of the researcher needed to be taken into account and the participants' own values needed to be incorporated if the democratic intentions of this study were to have any meaning. Listening to the students' voices about teaching and learning in drama was an ethical commitment and foundational to thinking about change and improvement within this field (Groundwater-Smith, 2007), incorporating the interests of those whom the change was intended to affect. This was what I tried to follow through the processes intended to lead to the formation of the *aesthetic community* through, for example, some informal discussions with students about what interested them in drama and why they had chosen it. Yet, as Thomas and Glenny put it in the context of promoting inclusion, the decisions taken when interests are not mutual reflect again moral judgments (Thomas and Glenny, 2005).

Other ethical issues arose in regard to the democratic intentions of this study, such as the issue of power. Although most researchers are not interested in dominating the research participants, they find themselves inescapably in relations of power and it is incumbent on the researchers to acknowledge and trouble the power immanent in their practice (Gallagher, 2006).

In relation to the participation of children or young people in the research, the extent and quality of their involvement needed to be brought into focus. Researchers such as myself who work with children must be aware that involving more directly the children in research does not resolve problems of power, or exploitation or coercion (Alderson, 2005). The perspective on children that the researcher has affects his or her ethical practice

(Christensen and Prout cited in Leeson, 2007) and the form that their participation takes. I will refer to Campbell and Groundwater-Smith who pay particular attention to the words used when referring to research practice; for example, participants instead of subjects to acknowledge the students' and teachers' contribution to the research; and research with rather than on students (Campbell and Groundwater-Smith, 2007). When thinking about power it is unethical not to recognize that as researchers we are favoured by power in our relationship with the research participants but on the other side it is unethical not to see both their vulnerability and their strengths (Fisher and Anusko, 2008).

Ethics is not a simple task, it is not an event. It is a whole process and a life-long learning experience (Somerville cited in Mockler, 2000). It is important to follow this idea because it illustrates that ethics is not something that you apply at the outset of the research but something on which one must constantly reflect on throughout the conduct of the research.

2.9 Portraying the research project and the research groups

In this section I will provide descriptions of the four groups that participated in the research project and the reasons for choosing those groups. I will first portray the two schools that participated in the fieldwork by narrating chronologically what happened in the preparatory stage during which I met the participants, negotiated my time in the field and participated as an observer in one of their lessons until the planning of the first workshop. After that the same procedure will be followed for the other two groups that

participated in the fieldwork. At the same time I will give information concerning the initial planning of the project and how that changed during my time in the research site. With these I aim to provide the reader with a clearer idea of my own research design before moving on to analyze the data that were collected in the field. The presentation of these will follow the storytelling methodology which is also the methodology chosen for the presentation of the data.

At the beginning, I set three criteria for the choice of the participants. First, drama had to be part of the curriculum of the school, second the participants themselves had to choose to do drama and third, to focus on two research groups from contrasting schools so as to study how this project evolved in different sites. As a result I didn't have many choices. This is because the Curriculum for Primary Education in Cyprus does not incorporate drama education. However, the all-day school, a constitution, that the Ministry of Education and Culture has introduced in the last few years, provides for the teaching of drama as one of the optional subjects along with physical education, Fine Arts, music, Olympic sports, dance and foreign language lessons that students can choose to be taught during the afternoon zone of the timetable.

The all-day school is an innovation that was introduced in Primary Education in 1999 at an experimental level to extend the school day for homework and other optional subjects. Gradually the all-day school schedule on a voluntary basis has expanded and today 150 primary schools incorporate it. Due to many weaknesses, though, that concern the training and specialization of staff, the number of students that participate, the quality

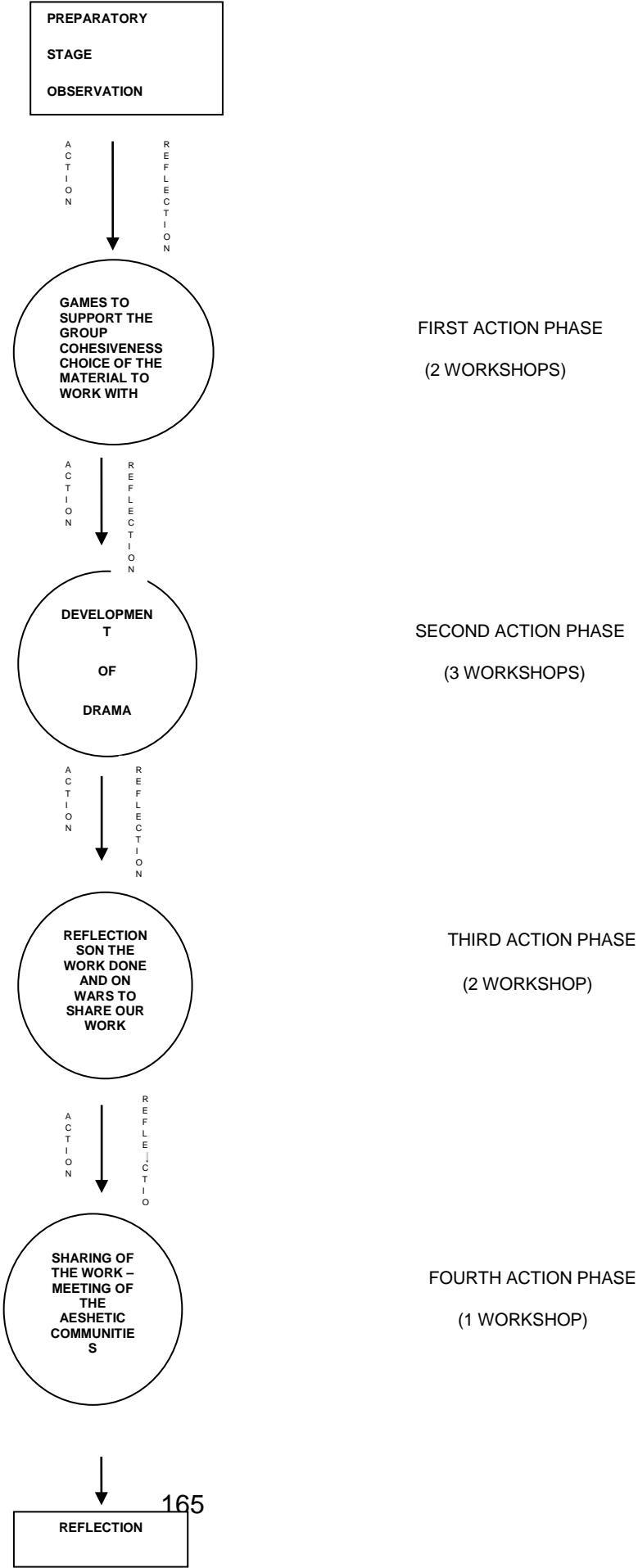
of the lessons provided, the lack of appropriate space and equipment and in order to safeguard the new innovation, the Board for Education approved in 2006 a plan for the introduction of the all-day school unipartite program with a different content and mode of operation from the all-day school program. Fifteen primary schools in Cyprus incorporated the all-day school unipartite program from 2007-2008 on a compulsory basis (Ministry of Education and Culture, undated).

The differences between the all-day school program on a voluntary basis from that of a compulsory basis relate to the specialization of staff that teach the subject, usually the provision of space and the fact that a subject can be offered as an optional subject as long as it is chosen by twelve students. In the case that no person from the staff is specialized in the subject, the administration of the schools commissions private individuals. The schools that incorporate the all-day school unipartite program were the ideal place to conduct my research as drama would be part of the curriculum and the students' participation in drama would not be mandatory.

Before moving to descriptions of the research participants I will refer to the initial plan that I had in mind before entering the field. This comprised of eight workshops. In the first meeting I would play games with the students to support their cohesiveness as a group. In the second workshop I planned to provide the students with three different stories and ask them to choose the one they preferred to work with. The third, fourth and fifth workshop we would develop the drama from the story they had chosen. In the sixth students would reflect with my help on the work done. In the seventh I would discuss with the students ways to share our work with the other school and finally in

the eighth workshop the groups would meet and share their work. The diagram that follows depicts the initial plan.

Table 1: INITIAL PLAN (8 WORKSHOPS)



2.9.1 The urban and the provincial school

As I mentioned earlier, I chose to focus on two groups. The next step was to secure permission for research in two of these fifteen schools. These two schools had to be different so I could examine how the action plan evolved in different contexts and test its limits, assess the areas of applicability and its generalizability (Steinke, 2004). I made a primary selection of two schools, one in a city and the other in the province. I called the schools and asked for an appointment with the head teacher of each school. I thought that a meeting in person would be a better choice in order to explain the project and maybe negotiate my entry to the school. I will be referring to the first group as the urban school and to the second group as the provincial school.

During the first week of February 2009 I made contact with the two schools but three months before I had taken all the necessary steps so as to obtain ethical approval from the Research Institute Board of Warwick University and gain permission from the Ministry of Education and Culture. After calling the two schools I made an appointment with the head teachers the same day. First, I visited the urban school. There, I was received by the secretary of the school who informed me politely that I had to wait for some time. During the time I was waiting in the reception room for the head teacher, I had a look at the large glass cases with drawings and other creations, awards and accolades that the school had received. All these linked with all that I had heard about this school, a newly built school that fulfills the expectations of the 21st century in terms of its architecture, its technical

equipment and its promotion of up-to-date educational programs functioning as a model to other schools.

My meeting with the head teacher was very short. I introduced myself and stated my interest to research in the school. I explained the project and provided her with a paper with the actual plan, with details about the time that I needed to spend in the school and the work to be done. The restrictions that were set in this meeting were to obtain approval for entry from the Ministry of Education and Culture and to proceed only if the class teacher agreed. The secretary provided me with the teacher's phone number and I left the school anxious about how the teacher would react.

Two hours later and after one hour's drive in the rain along a bumpy road, I arrived at the provincial school. There the head teacher welcomed me warmly. In her office, which is also the staff room, she offered me coffee and home-made cake and introduced me to the other members of the staff. We talked briefly where I explained the research aims, the possible gains for the students, and again provided her with the actual plan that I intended to follow. She was very receptive but repeated to me several times that I could research in that school only if I had a written permission from the Ministry of Education, something that I explained was already obtained and in my presence she called the teacher that worked there only in the afternoon to inform her about my intentions. The teacher did not reply but I left the school feeling very positive.

The same afternoon, I made phone calls to the class teachers. I had a very long talk with the teacher of the urban school. I felt she wanted to help

me but we had to negotiate a lot about the time that I would spend with her students – I was asking for eight eighty-minute meetings with the students - as she had already planned herself a lot and the students also had to start rehearsing for a performance that they would give at the end of May. Finally she agreed to help me and I proposed to help with the preparations and rehearsals of their performance after the project had finished. The teacher of the provincial school was very kind and accepted to help me but again the problem was the performance at the end of the school year so we agreed to five meetings instead of eight. I felt strongly during this conversation that, because the head teacher had approved the project, she felt obliged to help me.

The next week, that was the second week of February, I had arranged for the first meeting with the students, both of the urban and the provincial schools, to observe one of their lessons. The initial plan for two observations was set aside as the project would have to finish before the Easter vacation. I will refer first to the provincial group. Every school has its own particularities so did this one, something I realized as soon as I met its students. This group consisted of ten students aged from 7-11 years old, and only three of them were girls. During my first meeting I observed an eighty-minute lesson where the students were viewing and discussing from a power point presentation the origins of mask and its significance for different cultures culminating in the students' own making of masks.

Drama was taught in one of the classrooms of the school. The students were sitting in two rows. The first row was for students of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th grade, seven, eight and nine years correspondingly and the second row for

the students of the 5th and 6th grade, ten and eleven years old respectively. Before the end of the lesson the teacher accorded me some time to introduce myself and the project to the students and I explained in some detail what we would be doing the following weeks if they and their parents agreed to their participation.

My first meeting with the students of the urban school was arranged for the very next day. I expected better conditions as far as the space was concerned but instead I came across a situation that I knew would make things difficult. Drama was taught as two forty-minute lessons every week, on two different days and not as an eighty-minute workshop in one day. What is more, the lessons took place in the school hall where dancing and judo were taught at the same time. Drama took place on the stage of the hall and dancing and judo in the rest of the hall. Even though the curtains were kept closed all the time, there was so much noise that it was difficult for the students to concentrate and often sounds from the other side of the curtain distracted them into peeping around it. I observed a lesson in which students were divided in three groups according to their age. A group of nine-years old, a group of ten-years old and a group of eleven-years old were formed and each one had to make an improvisation based on a different theme. Before the end of the lesson I was given some time to introduce myself to the students as a teacher and researcher interested to work with them for a period of time. I explained what would happen over the next weeks and what was expected from them. I emphasized the fact that their participation was voluntary and that their parents had to agree as well to their participation by signing a form that I handed to them. I gave them some time to ask me

anything that they wanted and a child asked me if we would play games during the project. This confirmed my intention about the need to include in my planning the students' expectations, something I noted down later in my journal. Before leaving the school, I discussed with the teacher the possibility of changing the teaching place and the possibility of changing the two forty-minute lessons to one of eighty minutes, without having any expectations that this would happen. The assistant director of the school was the person to talk to about this and we met her immediately. The first requirement could be met. The assistant director proposed the school library, which was currently being renovated and which was half empty. I could work in there if I preferred but the second proposition could not be met as changing the time that drama was taught would mean changing the timetable for other students and teachers. This was challenging for me and the project but I accepted that I would need to re-schedule my planning, knowing that a characteristic of action research is its emergent developmental form (Bradbury and Reason, 2001).

In the week that followed, I worked on the first lesson plan for each group. I decided to start with a discussion about why they liked drama and why they had chosen to do drama after the boy's question during my first observation. I did not want to use questionnaires, something that I could have done at this point. The reason is that from my prior experience in primary schools I had observed that students involved in research usually begrudged having to fill in questionnaires. I preferred the form of a discussion in a circle.

After every workshop I spent time later writing in my personal journal my thoughts and over the following days I would observe the videos and do a micro-analysis of what was going on. Based upon these analyses I would plan

the next workshop for each group taking into consideration their specificities. For instance I included different games in each of the two schools as the spaces were different and posed different safety concerns.

I would like to refer now in more detail to the problems I faced in the urban school. As soon as I arrived for my first workshop many of the students approached me and told me that they wouldn't be taking part in the research as it would take time away from their rehearsals for the end of year performance. When the bell rang and we went into the classroom one of the students came to me with a letter from his mother who was informing me that she wouldn't allow her child to take part as she had not been officially informed by the head teacher of the school. She explained that she did not have a problem with the aims of the research or my own professionalism but considered it appropriate for the school authorities to inform parents about such a project. She also sent a similar letter to the head teacher.

The assistant head also informed me that another parent had come to the school to query the time line of this project and ask if it would interfere with the scheduled performance at the end of the school year. The teacher and I sat in the circle with the students and again we explained what participating in the project would mean and asked them to re-think with their parents. Afterwards, the assistant director of the school who is herself a drama/theatre pedagogue, volunteered to help by talking personally on the phone with the parents of the children who had not signed up in order explain more about the project's importance, directing them to talk personally to me if they considered it necessary.

Two days later, in the second half of the first workshop – I referred earlier to the fact that every workshop in the urban school was divided into two forty-minute time slots taking place on different days - all the students brought their forms signed except for the boy whose mother had written the letter. Thus this student was excluded from all the activities.

A week later, I received a phone call from the head-teacher of the school who told me the project had to stop due to parents' concerns. She explained to me that in this school many of the parents had high statuses and that she did not want to have any more trouble with them. I tried in vain to dissuade her but she was adamant. I was not wanted in that school as my presence was causing a lot of disturbance.

Half of the first workshop was used for negotiating my presence in the school and not for doing actual drama work. I was now given another week to conclude my work in the urban school. Under these circumstances, I felt that my project was falling apart.

2.9.2 The capital and the city group

Reflecting back on the work done with the urban and the provincial school, I realized that one of my objectives, to bring the two *aesthetic communities* together was not attainable. This along with the problems that I faced in the urban school made me think about the possibility of doing the fieldwork again. As soon as I had discussed this with my supervisor, I started to look for two other groups.

One of my criteria for choosing the participants as I mentioned earlier was for the students themselves to have chosen to do drama. Therefore, in doing the fieldwork again the choices were not many. It occurred to me that I could work with students that choose drama as one of their afternoon classes not part of public education. In this I could explore possible differentiations in terms of the space where the project would take place. After a conversation with a friend who works at the Cyprus Centre of International Theatre Institute I obtained a list of private organizations and people that run workshops for students and young people. I was very surprised to see so many of them. I made many phone calls, most of which were never replied to. Some people were quite abrupt, stating their concern about the importance of their own work, while others politely declined my offer.

In one of my phone calls I managed to talk with the director of a professional theatre organization which, as part of its educational agenda, runs workshops once a week for students of primary and secondary schools. We had a short talk on the phone in which he explained to me that he would grant me permission to work with their students provided the people who ran the workshops agreed. Three days later, on a Saturday morning I arranged my meeting with him. I arrived early but the director welcomed me into his office and even offered me a coffee. There we discussed the organization's work. He praised what the teachers/actors did with children and young people and explained that they ran workshops for two groups. In the first group the participants were aged from 8-11 and a second for 12-16 year-olds. In each group there were around 20-25 students and they were each taught by two people. He introduced me to all the four educators. The older students were

taught by an actress and a drama educator and the younger students by two kindergarten teachers who had also studied acting. This professional theatre organization ran an acting school from which the three actresses who ran the workshops had graduated. He even introduced me to some of the actors that were arriving then for rehearsals. Everyone was very polite and friendly and I thought that I was very lucky to be able to teach at that place.

I had a short discussion first with one of the female actor teachers of the group that interested me. She was very willing to listen to what I had to say and willing to help, a willingness in part due to the fact that the director had asked her to consider possible ways that they could accommodate me. After a while the second actor teacher arrived. She was informed by the other and we negotiated how much time I could spend with their students. Because it was already mid-April there was not enough time left until summer vacations and in the meantime they needed time for the performance they were planning for the end of the school year. We agreed on four one and a half hour sessions and that I could stay and observe the same day their work so we wouldn't delay the process any further.

The two women then showed me the place where the workshops took place. I was very surprised when I realized that twenty two students were taught drama in such a tiny space where ten desks with chairs, a double sofa and a small stage did not leave much room for free moving. This small space was usually used as one of the auditoriums for the theatre school. In this cramped room, in order for everyone to stand in a circle we had to touch each other. I immediately saw, with some disappointment, that many activities that I had in mind would have to change.

I sat in the circle with the students. In the beginning we did some exercises for them to get active and 'wake up' as the actor teachers were saying. After that I introduced myself to them and was given some time to discuss a bit with them about the kind of work we would be doing. The two leaders were very enthusiastic in the way that they introduced me therefore most of the students paid much attention to what I said. For the time left, the participants played games mostly and did some improvisations. I left the theatre with a very positive feeling in spite of the fact that both the director and the workshop leaders explained to me that they could not guarantee that it would be possible for the two groups to meet.

I now needed to find a second group for my fieldwork and this proved to be easier. I had recently met the artistic director of a professional theatre organization for children and young people. We had worked together in another project and during that time we discussed my work and the difficulties that I had met and he was kind enough to invite me to do my fieldwork with one of his groups. I made a phone call and arranged a meeting in the same week. The playhouse was in another city, around a forty-minute drive from the capital city where I live.

The group's meetings took place every Tuesday afternoon. I must say that I was impressed by the playhouse. Everything seemed very professional. There were two large placards with photos of their earlier performances, notices about the fencing lessons that the theatre provides, an advertisement about the summer school that the theatre planned to run and a poster advertising their current play. While I waited for the director to finish a meeting with some musicians, I peeped through the half-open door of the theatre

auditorium where a workshop for 5-8 year-olds was taking place. Finally the director called me and introduced me to the actor that ran the workshops for the 9-11 year-olds in the Greek language. I explained to him what I wanted and we agreed on four workshops as, once again, the group had to prepare for a show at the end of the school year.

We started the workshop on time and it took place on the stage of the auditorium. The lights were weak and on the stage there were many props that were obviously being used for some rehearsals. There were only twelve students in this group; only three of them were girls, one of them was eight years old and another was twelve years old. We sat in a circle and the actor introduced me by my name. They usually started the workshop by saying two good and two bad things that happened to them during the previous week. The participants seemed to enjoy this very much as everyone was very willing to speak and share his/her experiences with the rest of the group. They spoke about the birthday party they had been to, the good or bad test results that they had had in school, the Sunday excursion that they had been looking forward to so much, the fight they had had with their brother or sister and so on. Although I understood the exposure that this activity entailed, I thought that I should keep it during my time there to ensure some continuity between what they usually did and what they would be doing with me. It was also a chance for everyone's voice to be heard. The lesson continued with games and improvisations in which I participated. At the end I was given some time with them to explain what my work would involve, the potential not to participate if they didn't want to and I gave them the papers for their parents to sign.

At the end of the lesson I met again with the director as I wanted to discuss the possibility of bringing together this group with the capital group. He explained politely that this would not be possible for many reasons, some of which involved legal issues that concerned two of the students. Furthermore, as I had also been told by the director of the other playhouse, there were difficulties with regard to finance as the students would need to be transported to another city. The director and I also talked about the work done with the students and he gave me more details about their background and some of the difficulties that there had been in the beginning of the school year - for example the case of two hyperactive students brought here by their parents for them to expend some energy and the case of two siblings from a troubled family.

I left the venue realizing that I would not be able to follow the initial plan of bringing two communities together and that, once again, I would only be able to complete four instead of eight sessions. My new plan was therefore designed as four workshops and one observation. It involved its own preparatory stage (a participant observation), the first action phase, which involved the first workshop where we would be focusing on the choice of the story to work with. During the second action phase (second and third workshops) we would focus on the development of drama and during the third action phase (fourth workshop) we would reflect on the whole process. The two diagrams below depict the action plan that I have followed for the urban and the provincial group and the action plan followed for the capital and the city group.

Table 2: ACTION PLAN (Urban and Provincial School) (5 WORKSHOPS)

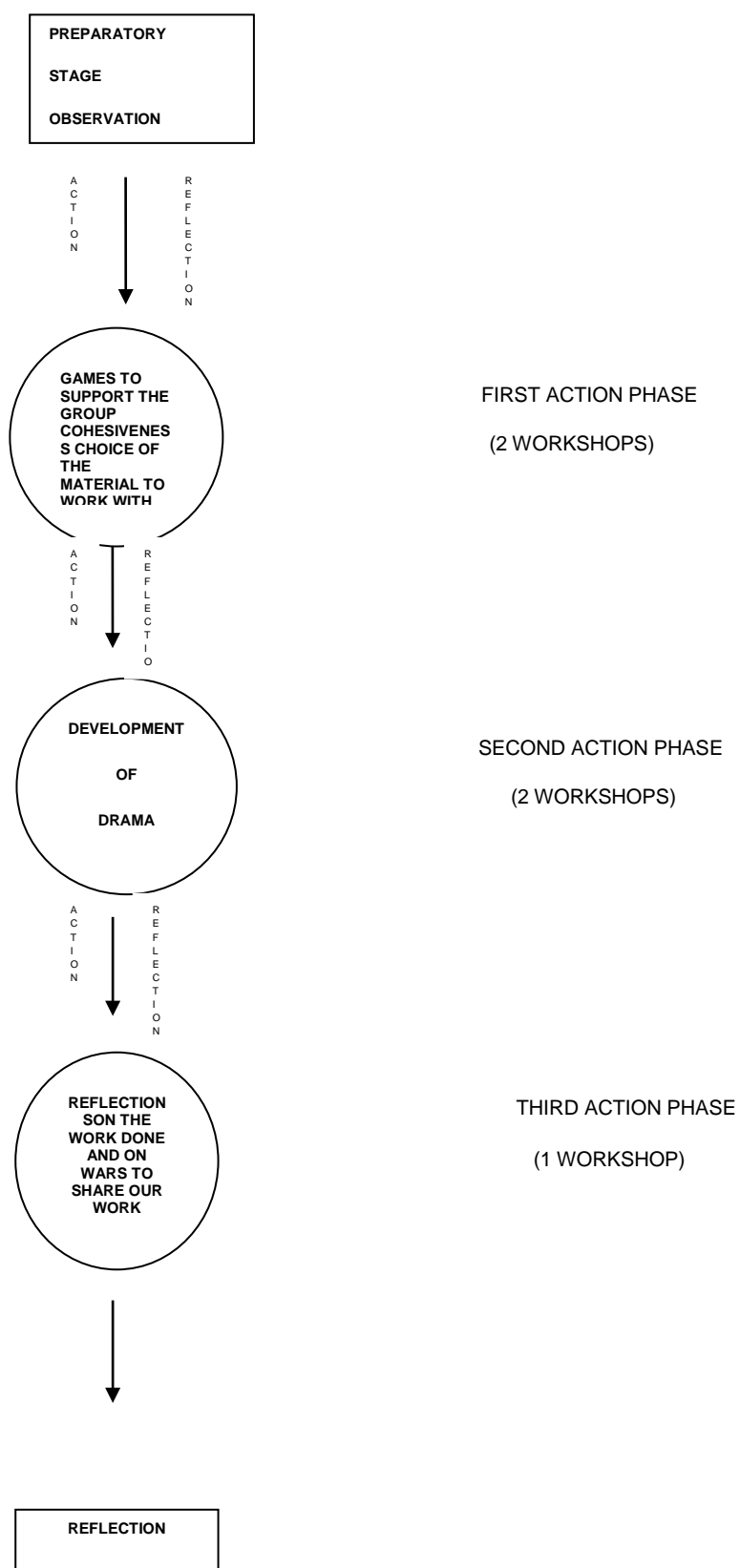
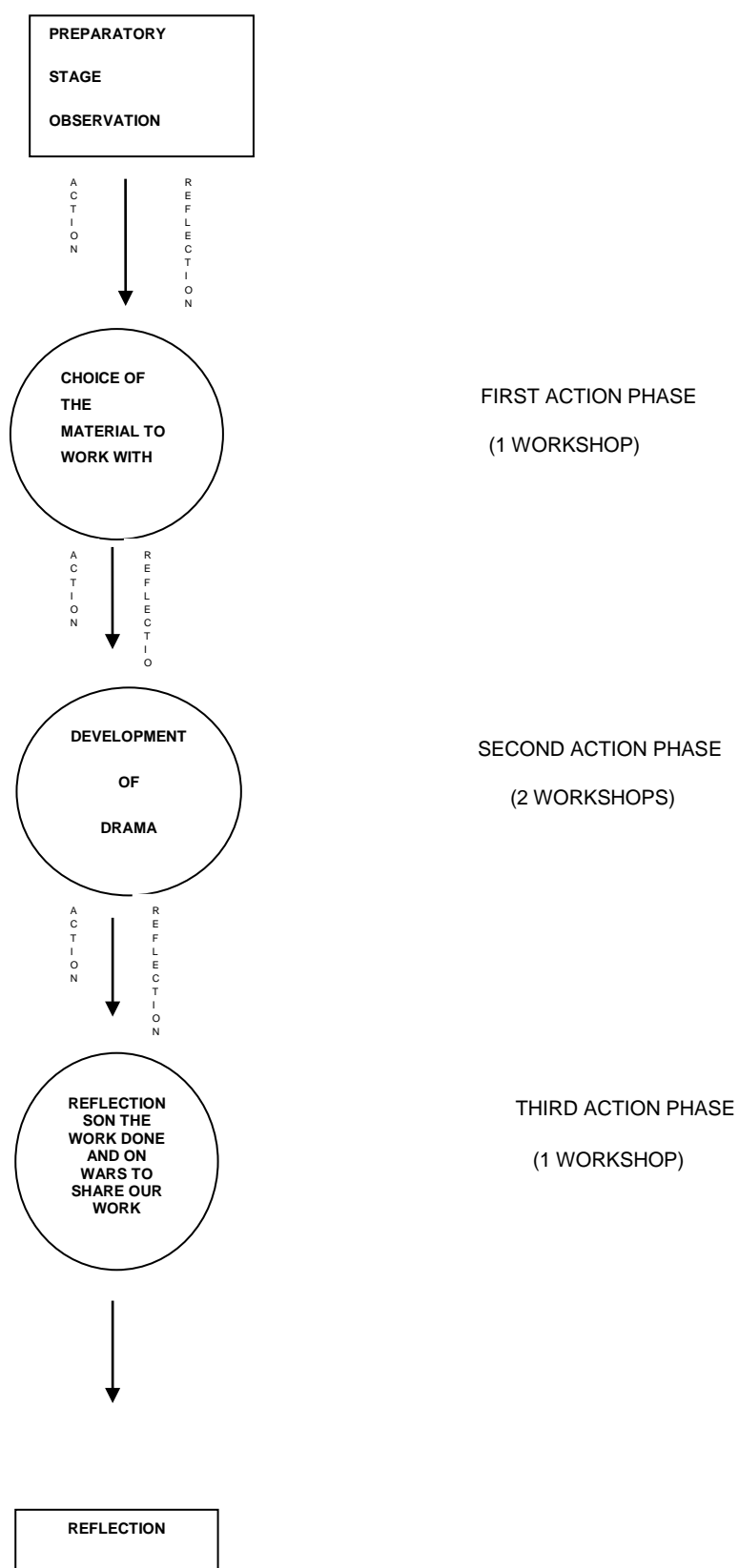


Table 3: ACTION PLAN (Capital and City Group) (4 WORKSHOPS)



Finally I would like to refer to my choice of the three stories to work with. I chose three different stories for this project. *The Magic Pillows* by Eugene Trivizas, *The Island* by Armin Greder and *The Red Tree* by Shaun Tan. *The Red Tree* was not chosen by any one of the groups. I realize that the figurative and at times difficult language of the images might well have deterred students of 9-12 years old. I chose it because it had no linear narrative and therefore left a lot of space for defining the story ourselves and because it gives prominence to hope, an issue that I have touched upon earlier in this thesis. *The Island* was another choice as it connected in a straightforward manner with the concept of community as something that can exclude as much as it can include, as critics of community point out (see for example Iris Marion Young, 1990). The story of *The Magic Pillows* was chosen because of the way it parodies authoritarian regimes.

I will close this chapter with the following chart that aggregates information about the research groups that participated in the research including the number of participants in each group and their ages, the number of sessions I had with them, information about the person who taught in each group and the time spent in the field. In the chapter that follows I will present my analysis of the data that I have gathered from the field.

GROUP	<u>URBAN</u> <u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>PROVINCIAL</u> <u>SCHOOL</u>	<u>CAPITAL GROUP</u>	<u>CITY GROUP</u>
NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS -AGES	18 students Ages:9-11 years old	10 students (only three girls) Ages: 7-11 years old	22 participants Ages: 8-11 years old	12 participants (only four girls) Ages: 8-12 years old
MEETINGS	Two 40-minute observations Ten 40-minute workshops (two workshops every week)	One observation Five 80-minute workshops (one per week)	One observation Four 90-minute workshop (one workshop per week)	One Observation Four 90-minute workshops (one workshop per week)
TAUGHT BY	A theatre studies graduate	A drama/theatre education teacher	Two kindergarten teacher/actresses	An actor
TIME SPENT IN THE FIELD	Mid- February until mid-March 2009	Mid-February until mid- March 2009	End of March until end of April 2009	End of March until end of April 2009

Table 4: Information about the research participants

Chapter 3: Readings from the data

3.1 Presentation of data: Storytelling in the flashback model

This chapter is concerned with the analysis and presentation of data. I will follow a storytelling approach in organizing and reporting the data and specifically the flashback model as Quinn-Patton describes it where I will present the story that illuminates how the idea of this project took shape practically (2002).

As Quinn-Patton mentions elsewhere the methodology followed for collecting the data manifests variations in the purpose of the research and thus has a major effect in the analysis. Specifically in relation to the action research methodology that I followed for the collection of data, where usually the process is the product (1990), the storytelling approach is consonant as the large descriptions that it entails, allows the researcher to provide the reader with a more holistic picture of what is taking place in the field and of the development that happens over time.

The main aim of this project was to investigate whether an artistic way of working within an aesthetic grouping could promote the development of the identity of the 'political body'; to explore whether a sense of agency can be promoted through our artistic actions in the context of the *aesthetic community*. I narrate the story of what happened in the field by dividing it into three categories that conform to the above argument. The three categories

are 'Formation and work within the *aesthetic community*', 'Acting/Working artistically', and 'Becoming 'political bodies''.

The data will be examined and presented under these three analytic frameworks even though the work done in the field was not segregated in that way. As the reader can easily realize from what follows, a piece of information that is cited in one of the categories might just as well fit into another category. The reason for following this way of presenting the data despite the fact that the fieldwork was structured in a way that intertwined the three levels is certainly not to differentiate and show in a linear way how the one can lead to the other. In any case specific acts that add to the building of the *aesthetic community* might also be considered as artistic work or artistic work might match with endeavor in developing the identity of the 'political body'. The presentation and analysis of the data in this form allows us to focus on different parameters of the work in order to explain how these build the argument. What interests me here is to show how each theme is important in its own right as an essential part of my dissertation. For example, I seek to illustrate how the idea of the aesthetic grouping fosters artistic action and how artistic action sustains the aesthetic grouping or how each and both might contribute to promoting agency; that is to becoming 'political bodies' and, correspondingly, how specific ways of working that relate to the development of the identity of the 'political body' might assist in the creation of the *aesthetic community* or might also be described as artistic work.

I will include separate descriptions and interpretations for each of the research groups that participated in the research under the three analytic frameworks mentioned above. This choice is consistent with the storytelling

approach in that the stories told here of each group have a 'more fundamental and ontological role'. I do not seek to focus on each case per se; rather I wish to tell the story in the mode of flashbacks, where the story told is not only a tale about each group. The story is part of what each group is and what it is potentially becoming. In the same line it involves myself as part of this process. As Mason and Dale explain about this kind of approach, 'the social world is itself seen as a 'storied' entity in the sense that stories involve some kind of sentient composition-where people 'make' and 'tell' stories rather just acting a part in them-are part of its very fabric' (2011, p.4).

3.2 Readings under the three frameworks

3.2.1 Formation and work within the *aesthetic community*

Work within the *aesthetic community* encapsulates moments of aesthetic experience and of cooperation and this is where the political dimension of this aesthetic grouping lies. I will refer an exercise that we did with the students of the urban school that they enjoyed. I call this exercise 'simultaneous clapping' (see appendix 1, 1(6)) and I tried it out with the participants of the urban school during the first session. I explained to them that this is a good activity for them to see if they are a good team. The aim for them was to succeed in clapping simultaneously just with eye contact without the need to be given a signal. The students told me that they enjoyed very much this activity, and as at first they did not succeed in clapping simultaneously, they asked to repeat it. During the second workshop, some of the students asked again for this exercise therefore I decided to include it in every workshop, as it was a good way for them to measure the extent that

they were becoming a good team. Although they never managed to clap simultaneously, their effort and concentration was for me important as it showed them working towards achieving an *aesthetic community* collectively.

In my first meeting with the students of the provincial school, I explained to them how important it is to work as a team and we played a game in the circle in which we threw the ball to each other by saying the name of the person to whom we threw it. The aim was not to drop the ball or forget to call the name. I also explained that this game needs focus and eye contact and indicates our level of teamwork. Since they liked that game very much and kept asking to play it in the meetings that followed I decided to include it in the last workshop when in the beginning of the lesson, we had to remember the story as it had been developed until that moment. We sat in the circle and each person that got the ball had to narrate something that had happened in the story. This worked very well as the students were pleased when they didn't drop the ball, they would add details to what was previously said, they made corrections and clarifications and stayed focused on the goal, which was to narrate the whole story. This taught me that an objective can be reached through different routes, especially when it is through a route the participants themselves want to take.

Additionally this is indicative of play's potential to function as a force of bonding and a way through which children can be involved deeply in a grouping since they are so motivated to be accepted in play that they make sacrifices of egocentricity for membership in the group (Sutton-Smith, 1997).

As Sutton-Smith acknowledges, issues about group power and group membership can be exercised and learned through playing which can lead to increasingly successful play experiences in the players' lives. Successful play experiences can increase the potential for continued happy playing which in this case is important for the sustaining of the *aesthetic community* and the drama work within that. It is also probable that it can lead to the attainment of more general competencies on an emotional or social level (ibid).

At the end of the third workshop the students of the provincial school were asked to present in four groups particular scenes showing how islanders were dealing with the issue of the stranger. The groups would then present their improvisations one after the other as in a montage. The titles of the scenes that they would work with were: 'Husband and wife read in the newspaper about the stranger', 'Teacher talks to his/her students about the stranger', 'Teacher talks to an islander about the naked man', 'The dialogue of the two islanders who found the naked man'.

As this took place at the end of a lesson, there wasn't enough time for the presentation of all the improvisations and for reflection. The students were very disappointed about that. As I watched the video and reflected on what we had done, I observed that the students worked very focused on those scenes and indeed seemed to enjoy this very much. (During the moment they were rehearsing their improvisations, the teacher of the class walked around in the space, videotaping closely the students as they worked).

I decided then to include this activity in the next workshop but this time the scenes would be videotaped one after the other as a short movie so as to

give the students the chance to experience once more what they liked and allow for reflection. Moreover, through this shared endeavor to produce a videotaped piece, both I and the students were presented with a way to explore the group's learning dynamic.

I was not mistaken as when in the next workshop we sat in the circle and I asked them to share something they remembered or something they enjoyed from the previous lesson, six out of ten students reported that they enjoyed working on and showing the scenes about the everyday life of the islanders after the naked man's arrival on the island. I explained to them that we would work again with those improvisations but that this time they would be allowed in their groups to choose the scene they preferred to present.

Before videotaping the scene, the groups took their place in the space. I explained that I would start videotaping the scene of the first group and at some point I would be pointing to another group to which I would turn the camera. There would also be a time that I would return again to the same group and the members should re-play their scene. Thus, the students had to be prepared at all times. The students took this task very seriously. They were silent waiting for their turn, respecting each other's presentations. Even though students of this group found it very difficult to use the Greek language, in the videotaped scenes they used the Greek language over the Cypriot dialect articulating themselves very well. On the choice and use of Greek language over the Cypriot dialect I will refer at a later stage.

John O'Toole remarks that 'if indeed art is primarily concerned with 'identity and community-the need to be and the need to belong' then it must

be concerned with power and control-the personal power to create and assert identity and the control over the communal situation that enables people to belong' (1992, p.149). O'Toole's argument is pertinent here and I would like to examine it along with the teacher's key role in determining the relationship that develops between himself/herself and the students. Beyond naïve assumptions that the students were controlling the situation here, I am arguing that through the dramatic task there was a high level of participation in the communal activity where the students were experiencing both a sense of control and a sense of bonding.

The drama strategies and the collective endeavor that framed the situation allowed for involvement and participation that could promote community and especially the building of an *aesthetic community* and this reflects the key responsibility of the educator to consider himself/herself an 'architect of the social space that contains and supports the aesthetic space' (Cahill, 2002, p. 17).

During the time I was observing the students of the capital group, I asked some of them in their break time, about the reasons for choosing drama and the reasons they like drama. Most of them replied that they do so because they like playing games. For this reason I decided to include a couple of games when planning each lesson. Here is where I find coincidences of the action research methodology with the formation of the *aesthetic community*. The development of an *aesthetic community* is processual and requires constant reflection on the part of the researcher

about what the interests and needs of the group are so as to gratify them whenever possible. Action research then is helpful as a commitment to reflecting and acting on that reflection towards your aim. Thus smaller alterations were made to the lesson plans in order to accommodate students' interests.

The character of the story that the students chose, influenced or even shaped the way that the drama work developed and the way that the participants' work was distinguishable for every group. This is very important for the building of the *aesthetic community* as distinctness is a defining characteristic of a community (Bauman, 2001). During the second workshop the students of the capital group had to prepare two small scenes in which we saw first the breach of one of the laws of the king and the punishment that followed and then the reaction of the citizens. All four groups chose to show a harsh punishment in a funny way. There was a tragic and a comical aspect in all the scenes that the groups prepared. For example in one we saw one of the citizens screaming and trying to escape from the guards that held him and were going to hang him as a punishment for making fun of the king. In the second scene we saw the citizens make their way to the palace in a threatening way holding some objects and when the guard perceived them he literally ran away and everyone in the audience laughed.

Another group chose to show the breaking of one of the rules which strictly defined that '*all lights must be switched off before 7:00 p. m.*'. In this scene the guards patrolled the city when they realized that it 'was 7:01 p.m. and there was still light in a house. They broke into the house and beat harshly the man who was obviously about to go to bed. At a moment they

asked him: '*Do you know what time it is?! You have the lights switched on!*'. As they kept thrashing him, the man tried to speak but the only thing that he managed to say is '*ssh....*'. And the guard said '*sshoot him*'. Everyone then broke into laughs.

The presentation of the short scenes that involved humorous elements related to their interest in the story of *The Magic Pillows*, which is more amusing than the other two in the sense that it has many comic elements in it. Fourteen out of twenty three participants chose the story of *The Magic Pillows*. Many of them reported that they did so because it is funny.

In relation to the political parameter of this comic way of presenting their improvisations, the laughter that it incited was indicative of the recognition of what they had just seen and of an unconscious positioning of themselves towards that situation, ridiculing the king and his guards and their mindless authoritarianism.

Rose explains laughter as an act of the intellect, which is critical in the theatre since it is a form of recognition of what we have seen which causes the provocation of thought to what we have just recognized (2003). In this case their ludicrous representations and the reactions that these bred designated their attitude as satirical and ironic. The depiction of social injustice in an aesthetic way is a positioning and can give perspective to the beholders, namely the other participants watching, as it can provide new insights and understandings or affirm and articulate a group attitude.

On a wider level what was happening here was that the aesthetic choice that the students made and the aesthetic character of the experience

within the group opened the way for the production of new affective possibilities. The aesthetic choice, initiated an aesthetic process in which other forms of communication were opened which were not only rational but also sensory-aesthetic (Boal, 2006).

As Boal argues, this aesthetic process is very enriching and enlightening as new forms of understanding are produced. The subjects exercise themselves in activities different from everyday life and expand their expressive and perceptive capabilities. The aesthetic distance that is created allows a distant viewing of the surrounding world, where this act of transforming reality can be also transformative for the person (ibid).

The building of an *aesthetic community* is not always easy or straightforward. This was the case for the city group. One of the difficulties that I faced was the fact that most of the participants preferred to always work with their friends and I found it extremely difficult to get them to work beyond their friendship clusters. Because of this some of the participants were excluded at different moments during the workshops. For instance in most of the activities I tried first the well-known 'hug in' exercise so as group formation would be random. In this activity, the students are supposed to walk around in a circle and when they hear the instruction 'hug in' followed by a number they are supposed to form groups analogous to the number they have heard with the people that are closest to them. In this case, the participants who wanted to work in the same group would follow each other or walk closely to the persons they wanted to work with.

The other issue that complicated things more was the fact that most of the participants were repelled by anything that had to do with written work, even for short written responses. This was something that I realized from the very beginning. The large majority of the participants preferred to work with the story of *The Island*. Eight out of twelve students voted for *The Island*, four of them voted for the story of *The Magic Pillows* and no one voted for *The Red Tree*. A first reading of the participants' decisions might be that they shared the same interest in the story. But as I looked again at their sheets I realized that some of them copied the exact same reply from their friends and in one case the same participant wrote on behalf of his friend. Their responses were allocated in this way: three participants preferred to work with *The Island* because the story is adventurous; two of them chose it because the story is moving and the other two because they wanted to see what the islanders did to the man at the end.

These two issues, namely the cliques within the group and the refusal of many of the participants to do any kind of written work, made things more difficult in the building of the *aesthetic community*. In the case of this group I tried to provide more opportunities for action, to which they responded very well, and to incorporate in the workshops I had with them the activity with which they initiated the classes with their teacher because they asked me to. This was the activity in which they talked about the good and the bad things that happened to them during the previous week.

This activity can be also very supporting for the development and sustaining of the *aesthetic community*. An *aesthetic community* is a community in itself and for community to be true to its nature is to provide for

the needs of the people in it (Bauman, 2001). I remember in one of the workshops when the artistic director of the Playhouse informed me before the lesson started about the sudden death in the family of one of the students and that we should give attention to and discuss this in the circle. He himself joined in and when the girl's turn came, she spoke to us about this sad incident and we all shared our thoughts.

What the artistic-director and the actor who teach this group did is in my opinion a model of what Noddings refers to as an ethic of care. In her treatment of a feminist ethic of care, Noddings defines *caring for* as requiring a response to expressed needs, monitoring the effects of our actions and reacting anew to the responses of those we care for and *caring about* as requiring us to work towards the establishment of conditions under which *caring for* can flourish (2005). While she supports the importance of organizing this at the institutional level to provide continuity and support for relationships of care, she points out that care can be conveyed in many ways and for this she considers personal manifestations of care more important for children than anything a particular curriculum can provide (Noddings, 2011).

In a very small way, both ideas above were in play here as not only did the artistic director *care for* the children in the group personally but he was also considering it as important to work on the development of personal relationships between the children in the group, making time to stay connected by this activity and its long term implementation. It is also worth mentioning that the *aesthetic community* is a group that is not moralistic in its rhetoric or intentions but that any community will wish to develop a set of

moral virtues such as trust, friendship, well-being and this moment is an instance of this.

3.2.2 Acting/Working artistically

In the last workshop the students of the urban school were asked in groups of four or five to videotape the scene that they liked the most from the story. They were free to choose the persons they wanted to work with and as expected they all worked with their friends. Therefore two of the four groups that were formed were single-sex; the one comprised only of girls and the other only of boys. This was not necessarily a negative thing as no one was excluded and as it did not interfere with the aim of the activity. Rather the students worked in a very cooperative and productive way. I will try to give an idea of that by describing the work of the two single-sex groups.

What the students produced was more than expected in regard to the time they had available to prepare, rehearse and videotape the scenes and the short time we spent in explaining the use of the camera. The group of five girls chose to show a scene in which the nightmares of the king come to life. The scene began with a girl pretending to sleep on a couch. We realized that she was the king as she was wearing a huge hat on her head. The girl had an anxious sleep as she was murmuring and sometimes screaming in her sleep. Another girl in the role of a guard entered the room to see what was happening. She took the pillow that the king was sleeping on in her hands. The pillow started to leap up in the hands of the guard. The guard tore the pillow and open-mouthed she saw the nightmare come to life. Two girls in role

as two freaks wearing two big black hats with chains hanging from them and red crests on the top of the hats began to chase and scare the guard and the king.

The scene was twice filmed. During the first time the girl who kept the role of the director instructed and gave recommendations about the acting part. For example she addressed the girl who was the guard by saying: '*You have to howl Anna (pseudonym)... You are in panic...*' and the girl tried out again her part, howling this time.

The girls then one by one talked about the reasons they had chosen those scenes as they were videotaped. The following are their words.

Girl 1 (the girl that kept the role of the director): '*We have chosen the scene where the guards ripped off the king's duvet because there we showed that the king has learned his lesson and that we shouldn't harm the other people because we wouldn't like it if they did it to us*'.

Girl 2: '*We have chosen this scene... Personally I liked it a lot because what the king did to the citizens, the citizens did it to the king. I would like that they like it as well.*'

Girl 3: '*We did this scene because we thought that it would be nice to teach the king a lesson. (As the girl speaks the girl who videotapes zooms in). The guards torn the duvet and ghosts and other bad things came out*'.

Girl 4: '*I believe that the scene we have chosen is a very good (she used the greek word kali) scene (the girl who videotapes whispers to her to come*

closer) because in this we show that it is unfair to do to other people anything that you wouldn't like to happen to you'.

Girl 5: *I liked this show very much. As if it was real. Thank you.*

The girls reported that they were having beautiful experiences. They found beautiful the moment when justice was rendered in the story. They named beautiful (the Greek word they used is *kalo*) what is just. They were attracted to and wanted to communicate this moment with their audience. Their use of the word *kalo* to denote beauty is important here. Interestingly, in a book called *Six Names of Beauty*, Crispin Sartwell studies how different cultures think about and look at what is beautiful. For the Greek culture, beautiful is the ideal. The Greek word for beautiful is (*kalos*) and for beauty (*to kalon*) which have both moral and aesthetic force. 'They refer to 'nobility' as well as what we would think of as direct visual beauty' (2006, p.88). 'To kalon, like all of the deepest concepts of beauty, entails comportment to the world, and emerges from one... The kalos world is a just world, a world that displays a moral order' (2006, p. 108). Justice is identified with beauty and they are both objects of longing, as Sartwell continues, things we want or need to be true (ibid).

The students' words along with what Sartwell argues connote the validity of Scarry's idea on the educational power of beauty and its connection with an education in social justice (1999 cited in Winston, 2008). As Scarry writes, 'beautiful things, give rise to the notion of distribution, to a life-saving reciprocity, to fairness not just in the sense of loveliness of aspect but in the

sense of 'a symmetry of everyone's relation to one another' (1999, p. 95). She does not just argue that symmetry is a shared feature of beauty and justice. Her formulation is stronger. She believes that a symmetry of beauty leads to a symmetry in justice. In her thought, one of the key features of beauty is its 'availability to the senses' (1999, p.103) while this does not apply to justice. She explains that symmetry across social relations is not always visible and in rare moments it is compressed in such a way so as to be available to the senses. In relation to the above incident, this fair arrangement in the story, where the king is tortured in the same way that he has tortured the citizens, becomes available to the senses through the dramatic form. The beauty of this moment of fairness becomes then visible.

'The invitation to ethical fairness' can be found according to Scarry in three sites 'the beautiful object... the perceiver's cognitive act of beholding the beautiful thing and... the creative act that is prompted by one's being in the presence of what is beautiful' (p.95). When the girls created an improvisation using the artistic form of drama to communicate their thoughts on what they find beautiful, attention falls within the third of these sites, whereas when other students in the group described this moment of creation as '*teleio*' (girl, 9, 17/3/09) which is the Greek word for perfect, attention falls within the second site.

Finally, as for the choice the girls made, namely the replay of the specific moment, it seems to me to illustrate Scarry's argument that beauty brings copies of itself into being, it replicates itself. Perceiving beauty as she adds, drives us to seek out other beautiful things. It evokes a longing for

creation (1999). In this case the moment they find beautiful, the moment when the king is punished for the sufferings he had caused, is reiterated.

The girls presented a scene in which they made good use of the characteristics of dramatic art as emotional involvement and dramatic tension (O'Toole and Lepp, 2000). The artistic way of working and the aesthetic experience that it yields is denotative of the educational value of beauty. On the importance of the beautiful experience has written Winston, who proposes beauty as a 'transformative force for good' and its potential to expand and heighten our consciousness (2006b, p. 299). Hohr agrees as he comments that 'if one considers the effect of beauty on the senses, aesthetic activity then becomes the tool of *awareness*. The individual's immersion in the world gains transparency, the patterns of relationship and of emotion become intelligible, sensuous dictates are broken, and sensuous inclinations are becoming objects of cognition and reflection' (Hohr, 2002, p.72).

Tod Gitlin's arguments are relevant here. Gitlin is not convinced by Scarry's arguments and explains that even if there is a parallel between love of beauty and love of justice, 'parallels are not causes'. As he comments referring to Scarry's ideas, beauty 'may prepare us for justice' but the wretched truth is that it may not. For him, her ideas do not acknowledge the fact that different ideas of beauty prevail among different cultures and social groups and that especially in what concerns politics 'ugly compromise may be the most just possibility under the circumstances'. In the end as he insists beauty must speak of itself. We cherish beautiful objects because of the fact that they are beautiful and not because they make us better people and

beauty should not be put to utilitarian uses as it is not the road to justice (Gitlin, 2001).

Talking specifically for educational contexts, I think that beauty may prepare us for justice as beauty and justice can interconnect at the symbolic level as I have attempted to illustrate earlier. As Winston suggests, people identify beauty as being of value in their everyday experience and this is indicative of its 'democratic rather than exclusive potential as a concept, one that we share and understand tacitly from our common experience'. For this reason those who are interested in social justice should respond to the call of beauty and its potential as a force for the common good (2006b, p. 289). Following his line, as educators we should focus on the experience of beauty itself as educational, without the need to entangle it with utilitarian outcomes. To be embroiled in such discussions and be suspicious and doubtful about the educational potential of beauty is to 'fail to address the democratic and radical potential of aesthetic discourse' (Armstrong 2000, cited in Winston, 2006b, pp.287-288).

The group of four boys chose to present a scene in which one of the nightmares of the citizens comes to life. A man slept and at the moment he opened his eyes he faced three creatures. The one was wearing a robe on his head, the second was wearing a kind of turban and the third a weird hat that resembled a parrot. The man rose and ran off. The creatures followed him, bit him and drank his blood. At the end he died. Three boys in the group commented:

Boy 1: *We have chosen this theatre we did because it was very good (the greek word they he used is kalon), very imaginative. There were many ghosts in it that chased this man. It was very good. I liked it.*

Boy 2: *I gave them the idea to do this theatrical piece because I like it when we use a lot of imagination and it was that we were inside the pillows. The one was the crazy one and us, the other two were Arabs and we were putting a spell on him.*

Boy 3: *Ladies and gentlemen, we showed this piece because it was very good. Let me tell you a bit about the characters. I was the greatest magician of the world, my friend here (showing the other boy, the one who was wearing the robe on his head) - the boy says: 'his assistant'- is very mean and my friend here, the crazy bird (the boy as the crazy bird moves in a funny way) and this victim (the boy as the victim cringes in a corner) is very scared and we will put him in his grave for sure. Thank you for seeing this amazing play. Bye.*

Both in these two cases and in the rest of the groups, each student had his/her part to play. The students had arranged for themselves their roles. The level of co-operation was very high without any intervention on my part or the teacher's. What else is of note is the fact that each group singled out a different scene for a different reason. For instance the girls chose the specific scene because of the feeling of justice that this left them with, making a political statement at the same time. The boys made their own choice because of its imaginative features and how this allowed them to play with it

and have fun. In their scene there was no moral dimension; quite the opposite as the 'bad guys' won.

In terms of the artistic aspect of their work, the students used a lot of props that made their presentations more vivid and colorful. Additionally, the student who held the part of the director attended to how one scene followed the other. For example, from the girls' videotaped scene it is obvious that the camera was paused and restarted whenever another girl would comment on the choice of the specific scene. In this, the spectator does not witness any confusion that the succession of the girls in front of the camera might have caused, rather we see the members' smoothly succeeding each other. The girl as director focused on the upper part of the bodies of each girl and sometimes zoomed in at the face. The girls took seriously what happened and acted as if they were being interviewed. They paid much attention to the language they used by not only being explanatory but also in not using the Cypriot dialect when they spoke. They used instead the Greek language.

The same happened with the boys' scene. Two of the boys of the group who were the troublemakers, and who most of the times used the Cypriot dialect, used the Greek language efficiently for their improvisation and commentary.

I would like to draw attention to this moment of the students using the Greek Language over the Cypriot dialect as I see it as a political choice that the students were making. Theoretically I will draw from Bernstein's work on the realization of formal educational knowledge and his use of the term 'code' to refer to the 'underlying principles which shape curriculum, pedagogy and

evaluation'. He introduces the concept of classification to speak of 'the relationships between contents' and frame for 'the form of the context in which knowledge is transmitted and received' (1973, pp. 203-205) and of their relationship that defines the code. He differentiates between the collection code in which the organization of educational knowledge involves strong classification and the integrated code in which there is an attempt to reduce the strength of classification. The codes also vary in terms of the strength of frame (ibid).

Drama sits with the integrated code in the sense that frame is relaxed to include the everyday realities of its participants, nullifying insulations between the uncommon sense knowledge of the school and the everyday community-based knowledge of teacher and students. Moreover, because of weak framing, there are some shifts in the balance of power between teacher and taught as the students can affect what, when and how they receive knowledge (Bernstein, 1973).

The specific instance that I am quoting above could represent a kind of openness in learning as that under integration especially in what concerns language learning. Drama not only gave them the platform to use Greek language effectively but it was also a rehearsal for its use and happened non-coercively. Both the Greek language and Cypriot dialect were used while working in and out of role and this was acceptable. In the specific moment, though, the students were making their choice. They were addressing the potential viewers of their work and considered it more appropriate to use the Greek language.

The production of knowledge, which in this case is about the acquisition of the formal language of the state, the language of power and of its uses, does not derive from 'sacred' and 'profane' sources (Bernstein, 1973, p. 213). It happens through its very use and through the cooperation of the learners when they are working together artistically. In the same way, knowledge and again here it is about exploring different uses of the formal language is not a 'private property' where children 'are encouraged to work as isolated individuals' as is the case with knowledge under collection (ibid). On the contrary they were learning together, from each other, by adopting the formal language of the state, the language of power, to communicate meaning and express their ideas both in and out of role.

'The less rigid social structure of the integrated code makes it a potential code for egalitarian education (Bernstein, 1973, p. 225). Drama is 'paradigmatic' of the integrated code (Neelands, 2009, p.7) and can play a leading role in an education for democracy.

To return to the students' videotaped improvisation and comments, it is obvious that the students were addressing potential viewers of their work and thus acted accordingly. Their enthusiasm and energy was invested in their work in such a way that they showed great responsibility for what they were doing. I want to connect this with what Winston refers to as the concept of the beautiful as a motivational force (2010, p.78). The students took control of their learning and found ways to co-operate in order to communicate their interest. They shared their work with great joy. They experienced beauty through the pleasure of producing and presenting their scenes and this is what Winston, in Schillerian tones, refers to as the students developing a

shared sense of aesthetic necessity to guide their reflections, decisions and evaluations during the creative process (2010, p.79). I see these as moments of beauty both on the artistic and the social level where the students were playing and creating together something that they felt was worth showing and talking about.

In another moment in the fieldwork, I suggested to the students of the capital group to draw during their free time at home a portrait of the king or produce a drawing as they imagine he is. Then, we would present these to the rest of the group and discuss his character more. From the eighteen students, three of them drew a portrait and one made a full drawing of the king. These are their drawings.





The first drawing was drawn by a boy of eleven years old. I was very pleased to see this. This boy was brought by one of the assistant head teachers of the schools to the drama class as he was already expelled from the art class and the judo class for misbehaving. I remember the moment his face turned red as it was announced to everyone that he was brought here because he was a troublemaker.

The boy explained that the drawing he made was one colour as he couldn't find his coloured pencils at home. He drew the king full-length. Commenting on his drawing, he explained to us that he had chosen to present the king holding in one hand the feather of a crow '*because with that he writes the cruel laws*' and in the other a telescope because with that he '*watches the citizens*'. On his head he drew one of his crowns and on his body a long mantle. He also said that he '*made him look mean*' (boy, 11, 12/3/09). The pupil was expressing the king's meanness through two bulging eyes, a big nose and sharp teeth inside a wide-open mouth.

The second portrait was drawn by a ten-year old girl. When the girl was asked to present her portrait she made specific reference to his eyes by saying *'his eyes are red because he is mean, and his head is like that because he thinks like...'* (making a square with her hands)' (girl, 10, 12/3/09). She also referred to the precious stones on the king's outfit and crown, like emeralds and rubies that he craved so much.

The third portrait was drawn by a nine-year old girl. This girl was very shy, quiet and well-behaved. I wasn't expecting her portrait as she rarely participated. The king's face is round, the outline of which is highlighted with black. This portrait is made with pastels. His characteristics are very big but his eyebrows and moustache are depicted by thin curly lines. He wears a king's outfit, and his hands, shoulders and neck are not visible something that other students pointed out. The girl explained: *'I drew the king like this because that's the way kings are supposed to be'* (girl, 9, 12/3/09).

The last one is a portrait that a ten year-old girl brought to the last workshop. She gave it to me at the end of the lesson, therefore we didn't have the chance to present and discuss it in the circle. In this the king's huge face is depicted in relation to the rest of his body. His eyes and eyebrows, nose, mouth and neck are very small. He wears a small crown, and his clothes and mantle are embellished with gemstones. In the breast pocket on his shirt he keeps some banknotes and also in the same hand that he holds the crow's feather with which he writes the awful laws. As a background the girl designs the palace's tower with two small windows.

Each student presents the king in his own way emphasizing every time a different aspect of his character. For example the first boy emphasizes the king's unkindness by paying attention to the characteristics of his face and even by using the red colour; the second girl draws many and different gemstones to show us his greediness and the red colour in his eyes (as she pointed out) and I would also add his curly moustache and grin to express his meanness. The third girl stresses a king's imposing bearing by his finery and through a serious look on his face; and finally the fourth girl signifies by the banknotes, the crow's feather and his clothes, his greediness.

The students worked through their own will, in their own time and space to produce works that bear some of the characteristics of art works. According to Mukařovský who speaks specifically for visual arts, a work of art regardless of its originator is intentional. It reveals intentionality. But for something to be defined as a work of art it must be excluded from practical usage; the work of art is an aim in itself. Furthermore, this intentionality is what makes the work of art a sign which is self-sufficient and has the capacity to evoke in its recipients a certain attitude towards all of reality (1976).

The students' visual makings reveal intentionality, something that was evident from the semantic analysis that the students made of their own drawings. At the same time, when these drawings were shown in the circle, they caused other students to exclaim which relates to Mukařovský's ideas above about meaning that is felt through artistic semioticity.

In visualizing the king, these students became meaning-makers, responding actively and creatively to their experience. In this case, they took

the initiative to produce a drawing in their own free time at home, in their own drawing style. The presentation of each drawing in the circle was a step towards revealing the interests that had driven them to draw what they had drawn and which were present in their drawings (Kress, 1997 cited in Hopperstad, 2010). This is also illustrative of my earlier argument about the parallels between artistic and political action, in that both are public and agentic.

At some point during the fourth workshop the students of the provincial school were encouraged to explore the naked man's feelings through image work. A volunteer stood in the middle of the circle and the participants were asked in turn to take the role of a sculptor and shape the body of the volunteer as if he was a sculpture of the man to convey to the rest of the class the man's emotional condition and thoughts. An eleventh years old girl took the lead and guided the boy who held the role of the sculpture to put his head between his hands.

Me: What does this person feel?

Boy 2: He has fear.

Me: Why does he have fear?

Boy 2: Because they might kill him.

The girl intervened to amend the posture of the boy by telling him to hold his head only with one hand.

Boy 3 (10 years old): *Like this, on your knees* (showing to the boy who was pretending to be the sculpt and moving the boy's hand to touch his head)

Me: *What do you think?*

Boy 4 (10 years old): *He begs them not to kill him*

Me: *And what else?*

Boy Girl 2(11 years old): *He is unhappy because no one accepts him.*

Boy 2: *He might wish he was free*

Another boy becomes the sculpture.

...

Boy 5 (7 years old): *He might be sad because he is far away from his home.*

The participants used their bodies to communicate meaning, that is, their thoughts about the man's feelings. They physically represented ideas by sculpting a body, an actor's most basic tool in theatre. By forming these sculptures, the students communicated first physically and then verbally their ideas. The frozen images encouraged a different kind of dialogue that allowed individuals to connect in a visceral way to issues that concerned them. In more detail, image work is useful as it allows students to express opinions that are still in a forming process. The images did not belong to an individual, to a particular student but to the whole class, which allowed them to participate and interact as a community. (McGeough, 2011 cited in Mitchell, 2011).

This specific instance is an example of how the work with the research groups is threefold. At the level of the *aesthetic community*, the interaction for the aesthetic representation of bodies to convey ideas and emotions was happening within the circle and concerned the entire group. This enabled students to use alternative modes of communication and the chance to express their ideas in a less constricted way. For instance an individual might choose to participate as a sculptor, as just an observer who reflects on other people's imaging or become the sculpture and find ways to embody and represent another person's ideas. At the level of artistic action, students were making theatrical statements just by using their bodies as aesthetic tools (Campbell, 1994) to communicate meaning. At the end the whole experience could be enriching for all the people participating, as dialogue was created within the community about an issue of pressing concern, where everyone could 'learn something', in the sense of becoming more aware of a problem, viewing different alternatives (Boal cited in Mitchell, 2011, p.75) reflecting more deeply on his/her own position or even taking a position.

With no intention to overstate my claim about what was happening in this moment and whether this was an issue of pressing concern to them, I want to speak about the level of engagement and the seriousness with which they dealt with the work. In working to ameliorate their potential as artists/actors the students imagined, acted, reflected with great zeal on a crucial social issue and this is about drama, as Taylor argues, providing 'a voice and a forum through which students can demonstrate their knowledge and evolving understanding of the world' (1998, cited in Cahill, 2002, p. 18).

During the last workshop with the capital group, the participants were engaged in the making of the picture book of the story. Some of the pictures they drew were: 'Arpatilaus as a child', 'The moment the king was rolled up', 'The creatures follow the guards', 'The biggest snailsnake' (see below, picture 1,2,3,4).



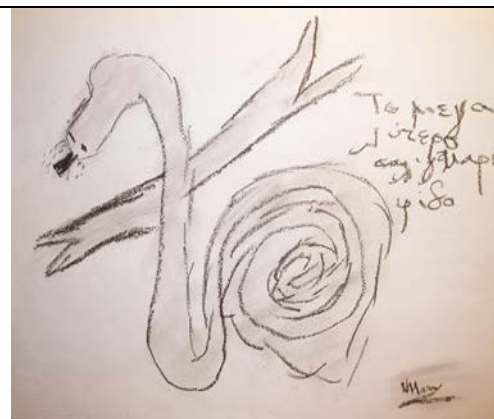
Picture 1: Arpatilaus as a child (girl, 10)



Picture 2: The moment the king was rolled up (girl, 10)



Picture 3: The creatures follow the guards (boy, 9)



Picture 4: The biggest snailsnake (girl, 10)

Students' drawings for the picture book of *The Magic Pillows*

The relationship of the pictorial sign to artistic work is what is of interest here. I will first describe the participants' drawings as pictorial signs seen from the standpoint of semiotics and then consider the connections to the thesis through some recent work on children's drawings from Mavers (2011)

Veltruský explains the picture as a specific type of sign that is defined by the way the signified is connected with the signifier. In more detail, it is the materiality of the signifier (or sign) that affects largely the way the picture conveys meaning. This is evident by the semiotic effects that the different colors produce or other material components and properties of the picture as for example line and design (1973). In picture one, for example, a ten year-old girl drew the king as she imagined he was as a child. The tower for him was as important as the baby bottle and he played with toys such as guards, servants, palaces. The girl used only three colours for her picture, mainly black, red and azure. The picture was both 'funny' and 'scary' as two boys of the group commented. Funny perhaps because of the big size of the baby's head on his small body, the diaper he wears and the small crown; and scary perhaps because of his odd eyes, different in size and shape, and freakish mouth, with triangular and rectangular teeth on which the girl drew something red that invoked blood.

In this pictorial sign, the material properties of the signifier produced psychophysical effects and these always have some semiotic connotations. The combination of black and red on his teeth, as well as their shape, aroused 'affective responses' making its symbolism felt (Veltruský, 1973). The same can be said about picture two in which a circle that represented the king's

mouth and two lines that meet each other in the space in between his eyes manifest his fright.

In her recent work, Diane Mavers, guides the reader to look for the remarkable in the unremarkable in children's drawings and writing. In her formulation drawing and writing is a mark of meaning, it is not accidental; it is in fact 'agentive sign making' where people exercise choice in their shaping of meaning (2011, p.7). Text making, either drawn or written, demands 'semiotic work' which goes beyond being just an activity; it is 'principled engagement with and in the making of meaning' (Mavers 2011, p.9). In using Veltrusky's ideas above I sought to render the participants' drawings as a series of selections on many levels, ranging from the line and design to the colour; what they chose to draw and how they drew it involves their interpretations of what is needed in order to make meaning.

What is indeed intriguing in the ideas of Mavers in relation to how artistic action relates to the development of the political body that is of relevance to this thesis is that seeing *inventiveness*, *originality*, *ingenuity* in children's drawings and writings and enabling them to produce different texts can be formative to their identities (2011). Considering, for instance, the choice of drawing the king as a child (see picture 1 above) was something that was never discussed in the group. It was her choice and interpretation of something that added to the story to include in the picture book. It was about making judgments, about fitness for purpose, since we aimed to make a picture book that could replace the written book so a person that read it wouldn't have to read the story as well. The picture book then did not only include aspects of the story that I gave them through narration but also their

own personal additions, which denoted a deeper engagement with the material (see also picture 3 and 4).

The above semiotic texts the participants made are characterized by *resourcefulness* and *purposiveness* and not *randomness*. Providing opportunities as the above for text-making is to 'regard children as social agents' and will give them opportunities to frame their own projects and to assume responsibility for those. To quote Mavers once more, 'nurturing positive text-making dispositions that are full of initiative, confidence and openness can enable children to participate in the world responsibly and with dignity' (2011, p. 129)

Working artistically in drama presupposes employing a theatrical code to create meaning. By theatrical code I mean the tacit agreement that as participants in the drama we are enacting another reality through the symbolic transformation of our presence, time and space and the symbolic use of objects, sounds and lights (Neelands, 2003).

In the last workshop, the participants of the city group were divided into five groups in order to present scenes depicting the everyday life of the islanders after the man's arrival. One group used a long red cushion when rehearsing for their improvisation, heaped along with other red cushions in a corner of the stage. After that, every group wanted to use a red cushion for their improvisations. The participants presented four scenes in which the red cushion symbolized something different. The first group presented a scene in which the teacher discussed the man's arrival in the town's plaza with two

islanders - a boy and a cushion representing another person. A boy and a girl pretended to be husband and wife in their house reading in the newspaper about the naked man. The man sitting on the floor pretending to read the newspaper called his wife to go and have a look at the newspaper. The woman then came in, placed the man's lunch on the table (symbolized by the cushion), and then took the newspaper to read it. A third group presented the teacher lecturing his students about the man; here the red cushion was the student's chair. In the last scene we saw the two islanders that had found the man on the beach that morning talk about him, while a red cushion represented the man. The fifth group refused to show their improvisation as they thought that they weren't prepared enough.

In terms of semiology, the above illustration indicates how students were following the code of theatre and how they were developing their own specific symbolic props from what was available and taking the lead from one another. As Esslin writes in *The Field of Drama*

'all art and especially the art of drama in particular is largely based on conventions that must be shared between the artist and his audience and must therefore be an acquired skill that ultimately must be learned. Much of this learning process occurs almost spontaneously simply through steady and prolonged exposure to the ruling conventions' (1987, p.50).

Esslin refers to the spectator with the above statement but I think in relation to the drama work that we do with students, when often there is no external audience and where we are the audience to our own acting, this becomes very important as through collective play students learn about and play with the conventions of the art form.

I would like to bring in at this point of the analysis some thoughts on imagination as conceived by Mary Warnock that relate to the above research moment. But before embarking on that I would also like to include in this discussion the following moment.

In another instance during the second workshop the participants of the city group were presenting their version of what the islanders and the mayor had decided to do with the stranger. Each group would present on stage and the rest of the class, as the audience sitting in the auditorium, would view and then discuss the scene. One of the groups presented their silent improvisation and then the other participants were asked to discuss it. A girl then said '*I didn't understand anything miss*' (girl, 10, 6/4/09) while another girl added '*It wasn't obvious who the stranger is*' (girl, 10, 6/4/09).

The participants then were asked to present again their improvisation and try this time to make clearer to us the decision that was taken. A dummy was taken to the place where the man was being kept. The boy who imitated the dummy was motionless. At some point the man looked at the dummy and began to destroy it. The islander then broke into and started to hit the man violently. A boy, the oldest in the class, commented eagerly but not very articulately as Greek is not his mother tongue: 'Andrew was the dummy that

he threw rocks on it, so they realized how he acts with young children. Nick jumps out and kills the stranger' (boy, 12, 6/4/09-the names used are pseudonyms). The students took some moments behind the curtains to polish their scene so as to communicate their idea more clearly.

Mary Warnock's ideas on imagination are the missing link between these research moments and what I want to argue for. Imagination is highly valued because it 'is concerned with what is not' which allows us to think of possibilities as well as actualities (1983, p.74). There are now two important consequences in thinking of imagination as the capacity to think that which is not. The first consequence is that imagination is a source of freedom. This is so because through imagination we are free to conceive of a world that is different from the present one and plan and act towards its realization. The second consequence is about imagination being a source of pleasure and for Warnock this is where we should stand because the aim of education should be pleasure (1983).

Some elucidation of this idea is necessary in order to relate it to the artistic way of working. Notably, this pleasure is about power. It is the pleasure of power we get, not in exercising power over other people, but about the pleasure we get from organizing our environment to make it intelligible. Warnock refers to this kind of pleasure as the pleasure of competence. In her words:

'We can pretend. We can think ahead... We can treat one thing as symbol of another and use the symbol to illuminate and increase as

well as to express our insight. In all these ways, we can increase our power over the environment, our sense of being able to control it, to use it, to do what we want, to understand our position in it and explain that understanding to others. This is one of the deepest pleasures towards which education is directed' (Warnock, 1983, p. 80).

Concerning the incidents that I have described earlier and their association with these ideas, what was happening was that the participants were involved in a process in which they were using both their bodies and other objects as signs in their effort to explain to each other their point of view, their idea. Specifically in the second incident where the first improvisation the group presented was unclear to the rest of the group, the members went back to their improvisation and looked for ways to present it more clearly just by using their bodies. The successful use of signs in the first instance, as well as the unsuccessful use of signs in the second instance, that obliged the members of the group to find another way to be more explicit was about them experiencing through the dramatic work, this organizational power that can emerge by virtue of imagining. Particularly for this case they learnt from each other, as it was their own comments that made them look for ways to make their ideas intelligible.

Lastly, when watching the videotaped material from this workshop that I am referring to, there was a moment when a group received positive comments about their presentation. The members of the group as they heard those comments looked for each other and touched their hands in the air feeling proud about what they did. Through these small achievements as they

play, students can experience moments of self-respect and being appreciated by others. In this moment for me lies what Warnock refers to as the pleasure connected to the organizational power that imagination bestows.

3.2.3 Becoming 'Political Bodies'

During the third workshop, I informed the students the students of the urban school that they had to attend a ceremony during which king Arpatilaus would be declared as 'Best King of the Year'. Straight away some students reacted. A girl said: '*Why? Miss, how declare him?*' (11, 5/3/09), another boy said: '*I am not going there!*' (10, 5/3/09), while another boy shouted '*This is a lie*' (9, 5/3/09).

During the discussion that followed, the students realized that they were forced to attend this ceremony otherwise the king would establish another law with a harsh punishment for those who did not. Having no other choice, everyone attended. Two students held the role of the guards and a third that of the king. Along the length of the room, the students formed two rows, one facing the other. Along each row a guard walked with a stick, making sure everything went as programmed. The task for them was to cheer and clap while the king passed through the two rows but when they felt my hand touching on their shoulders they should be speaking their inner thoughts loudly.

The students enjoyed so much this improvisation that they insisted on repeating it. We repeated it once more. The girl who held the role of

Arpatilaus the second time was walking with great pride along the rows. Some of the citizens' thoughts that were heard were: *'bastard', 'worm', 'squint', 'trash'*, while when I touched one of the guards, he said: *'He is the best!'* (boy, 10, 5/3/09). Everyone laughed at that moment.

Building on that activity, we then moved on with another improvisation in which we would enact a scene that happens in the citizens' imagination where they were free to say anything they wanted to the king and the rest of his people. Four volunteers as the king, the king's adjutant, the chief of the palace's guard and the palace's chief magician had to sit in a small circle with their backs touching. Trivizas, the writer of the story, made up very funny names for these characters, playing with words such as grab for instance for the king - *the Greek word for grab is **arpazo** and thus the king **Arpatilaus** as the one who grabs things* - trash for the name of the adjutant and nitwit for the chief of the palace guards. The pupils who took the roles of those characters, tried to react to these names in their faces, ways of speaking and walking and there was a lot of joking around this.

The rest of the class in role as citizens had to form a larger circle around the small circle. The task was for them to walk slowly but aggressively towards the four people and say to them what they thought about them, at the beginning in a whisper and then louder and louder as they approached them. I explained to them that the no-touching rule applied.

Within the chaos of the students' screamings, some of the thoughts that were heard were: *'We will kill you'* (girl, 10) *'I will kill you bastard'* (boy 1, 10), *'I wish I could whip you while you are hanging from the ceiling'* (boy 2,

10). (This last thought was actually one of the punishments in one of the king's awful laws about trespassers on the private property of the king that the same student had written in an imaginative activity that preceded this one)

After the ceremony, the students as citizens had some time to discuss what had happened before it was 7:00 pm and they had to return to their houses (another law that the king had established: a 7:00 pm curfew).

In role as a citizen, wearing a jacket and a hat, I walked within them, and put some short notes into their pockets secretly. The notes were:

Everyone at the old mine at
midnight

X.

Just before the end of the workshop we sat in the circle and discussed about this person X and the note he had given them. Students reported that: *'There is something mysterious going on'* (girl, 10), *'They shouldn't go because it might be a cheat'* (boy, 10), *'Arpatilaus may want to trap them'* (girl, 9), *'Who is this person X? Nobody knows him'* (boy, 10). The pupils, later in the circle, interpreted their reactions as citizens. *'They are always afraid'* (girl, 11), *'they are scared'* (boy, 9). They pointed to the fact that the citizens were overwhelmed by distrust, suspicion and fear. The workshop ended with the citizens taking time to decide if they would go the old mine to meet X or not.

In presenting these moments of aesthetic experience I am aiming to theorize through the work of David Hargreaves how these moments can be seen as illuminating experiences of a liberating character (Abbs, 1994) and how this connects with freedom and critical understanding in Maxine Greene's sense as I have discussed about it earlier in this thesis.

Hargreaves detects four elements in the aesthetic moment: *the powerful concentration of attention, a sense of revelation, inarticulateness and the arousal of appetite*. Concentration of attention describes the state in which the person is absorbed and fascinated by the art object, in this case by the dramatic activities. The sense of revelation denotes the state in which a new reality is opened before the person, which is intensely real. Inarticulateness is about those moments when our feelings drown our words and lastly the arousal of appetite is about the desire for continuing or repeating the experience (Hargreaves, 1983).

All the above inhere to the experience the students were having. There is a sense of elation where they were playing seriously, laughing and often overacting, imagining and holding their roles as citizens constantly and insisting on repeating the activities and games. These aesthetic activities are part of an extra-daily sphere; through dramatic playing the pupils were entering a new plane of existence.

The drama form in this case created an aesthetic distance that was necessary for a distant viewing of the world. If we are to see the real, as Boal argues, some aesthetic distance is needed, which is created through imagination and the capacity to symbolize and create allegories (2006). What

this moment exemplifies for me is the experience of freedom and how this relates to critical understanding in Maxine Greene's view, where freedom is about expending options, knowing alternatives, breaking with the habitual and the routine (1988).

The students as citizens were attending the ceremony, even if they did not wish to as they realized that it was better to do that than suffer later from another cruel law. This was for them a one-way road. But the moment of laughter, when no one but the guard believed that the king '*is the best*', was a moment of recognition (boy, 9 years old); by laughing they were responding to the irony of the situation they were immersed in. At the same time, their comment signifies their realization that the citizens were being oppressed and how they were finding a way to resist, even if only in their imaginations.

I would like to dwell for a while on the above ideas and explain further their connection to the identity of the political body. When we moved on to enact the scene where citizens would meet X. with this group, I was very surprised to see that two girls had brought with them the small note that X had given them the previous session! They were looking forward to that meeting. We shut the curtains and switched off the lights and sat on the floor. By taking the role of X, I started to talk about who I was and invited them to discuss about what was happening to us, only to be interrupted by a girl who told me that to be X I had to wear the brown jacket that he had been wearing the previous time and which I had forgotten this time. The jacket was characteristic of X and the students wanted it to sustain the illusion.

I told them that since my house was behind the palace I had observed very weird things happening and that Vriselie, the palace magician, always kept with him a small green book which only at night he left in his lab. Then at night there was always a guard outside guarding the lab and maybe this had something to do with our nightmares. After a heated discussion about the possible dangers or benefits of taking this book, the citizens decided to steal it and see if it was connected with the nightmares. We played the game keeper of the keys for a while and then a girl who managed to take the green book opened it and revealed the big secret. Inside the book, a recipe was kept for making pillows that caused nightmares.

Nightmarish pillows

Recipe:

Ingredients:

- Some hair from a goblin's tail
- ½ glass of seaweed from the Sea of Grief
- A teaspoon dust of guilt
- One large spider's web from a disused lighthouse
- 3-4 strips from a ghost's sheet
- Pieces of a wet handkerchief from a dying person
- Traces from a traitor's shadow
- The changing skin of a poisonous viper
- The stinger of a wasp
- A dash of ashes from a burnt doll's house

For the pillowcase you will need the bloody cloth of a bullfighter.

Procedure:

Mix all the ingredients together and let them curdle overnight.

Put the mixture inside the pillowcase and sew with hair from a rampant horse.

The rest of the class heard this girl read the recipe with bated breath. Everyone was speechless. After some moments the students interrogated the person who was guarding the great magician's lab. I held the role of the guard. As this lesson was not videotaped I will try to encapsulate what I consider important for the argument here, drawing from extracts from my personal journal.

The interrogation took some time in which the students as citizens thought about different ways to handle the new situation. Different options were heard about how to keep the recipe to ourselves, to copy the recipe, to re-print the book and return it and keep the original. I was asked if I could do something as a novice magician to help them make new pillows just like the ones they had before. Others insisted that we should gather all the pillows and return them to the palace or to make a new nightmarish pillow and give it to the king to see what would happen, while a girl suggested that we should take out all the material from our pillows and make from it a huge pillow for the king. At the end we agreed to follow the girl's suggestion and as a trainee magician I could try to make new pillows for the citizens.

Together we made the recipe for the new pillows to cause sweet dreams. Students suggested that as ingredients we could use:

-half a glass of seaweed from the Sea of Joy

- toys

-some love

-presents

-photos from our loved ones

-photos from happy moments

-a feather from a dove

-sweets

In the same exercise with the participants of the capital group other ingredients suggested were:

-the scarf of the football team they support

-Christmas garnish

-children's recorded laughs

-a cross

-freedom in Cyprus

-something for friendship

-a letter from the Minister of Education to announce the closure of schools

In a preceding chapter, I have argued that freedom to act and think differently is relevant to the creation of the democratic personality. In the context of a game, as Tully has argued, the ability to think and act in ways that are definitive of the identity of a player are acquired through the exercise of the

player with other players in the game itself (Tully, 1999). He then moves further to explain how this works in parallel in politics.

In a similar way, drama can possibly allow players to think and act in ways that are definitive of the identity of the democratic personality as and when they play. Through this series of activities and improvisations, my intention was to keep the students active at all times where their actions would influence the course of what was happening on a dual level. On the one, their actions affected the way the lesson was carried forward. For instance the decision about how to act after they had found out about the recipe for the nightmarish pillows was a collective decision that came out of the interrogation of the guard and the resulting discussion. On the other, within the role within the fictional reality, the students were defining their course of life as citizens.

In the third workshop in the provincial school the mayor of the island held a meeting in which he invited all the islanders to discuss and share their opinions on what they should do with the islander. What follows are extracts from the dialogue between the islanders and the mayor, whose role I had taken.

Mayor: Good evening everyone, I have invited you here for a very serious issue. I imagine that you have all seen the stranger... I am very concerned. I

have tried to talk to him but he doesn't speak our language and it doesn't seem that he wants to speak at all.

What do you think we should do?

(Some of the students raise their hands but I remind them that we are the islanders and not the students)

We are gathered here to discuss our island's good. You all have children, families, what do you think we should do?

Boy 1 (9 years old): *We should ask a question and if he does not reply we should expel him from the country.*

Mayor: *I have already asked him too many questions; he does not reply; he does not talk. He must speak another language.*

Boy 2 (9 years old): *We should make a small boat for him to go back to his country.*

Boy 3 (10 years old): *I know, I know!*

Mayor: *But if he is dangerous?*

Boy 4 (9 years old): *I say we should host him one day so as to see how he will behave and if he is a nice person and he behaves well, but if he is not nice and tries to hurt us, send him away.*

Mayor: *Yes but we have children...If he is dangerous. I am afraid for my children.*

Girl 1 (11 years old): *Can I talk?*

Mayor: *Yes please do! I haven't met you before. Where do you work?*

Girl 1 (11 years old): *I work for the Creative Art School.*

Mayor: *We didn't have the chance to meet before.*

Girl 1: *We should stalk him and see his movements. If he steals or does something bad we should send him away, if he is a good person, we should leave him.*

Mayor: *Ok, stalk him. But, what do you mean? Allow him to walk free in the streets?*

Boy 2 (9 years old): *Yes, but if he pretends to be nice? So as not to be beaten up...*

Mayor: *And who should follow him?*

Boy 5 (7 years old): *We should put guards to stalk him out there.*

...

Mayor: *Do you have any other suggestions?*

Girl 2 (11 years old): *We should offer him our love and care and then investigate if he is a good person or if he is a bad person'.*

Mayor: *I do not want, and excuse me for interrupting you, to offer him my care. My children are afraid of him and so am I.*

Boy 3 (10 years old): *I think we should stalk him. And if he goes somewhere, then immediately run after him without him hearing us and grab him and sent him away.*

....

Through this dialogue, dilemmas were created where the participants in role as the inhabitants of the island could explore 'existential decisions in the peripheral of being' (Allen, 1999, p.197). The participants examined in role different options and experienced the need to take a decision, gain insight into their own attitudes and even form an attitude.

A model of dialogue as such, O'Toole and Lepp describe as 'a social act' where the sharing of ideas is necessary for anyone to learn anything and hold ownership of that knowledge (2000, p.28). They acutely define dialogue as something more than a simple exchange of ideas, quoting Bakhtin's thoughts about dialogue as 'a struggle to create meaning which is central to the way we think, understand, read, interact, form beliefs, acquire ideologies and thus 'author' meaning.' (ibid, p.28)

After the discussion, the students in groups presented short scenes that could be silent or include words to show the decision that the islanders had taken regarding the stranger after their meeting with the mayor. Each group had to show their scene and at the end each group had to explain why they had taken that decision. The common theme among the scenes that emerged out of the students' reflections is that of prejudice against what is different, what does not 'fit', as the girl in the second scene said. The students prepared scenes in which they explicitly showed the hostility of the islanders towards the weak man. This is also evident from their choices of who took the role of the weak man. Through their reflections and their comments later in

the circle they pointed to the intolerance and discrimination the islanders showed and where this had led.

I facilitated the dialogue through my role as the mayor to lead the participants as the islanders to face the dilemma of what they should do with the stranger. As Mitchel writes, critical dialogue presupposes brainstorming solutions for societal issues and embodies Freire's concept of authentic thinking in which individuals work synergistically to change their reality (2011). My intention here is neither to idealize drama's potential nor that of dialogue per se, nor to overstate changes that might have been achieved. I would like to provide another extract from the dialogue of the mayor with the islanders before analyzing further the whole activity, the responses of the participants and the meanings that they might carry.

...

Mayor: *But if he dies in the sea... Because then I... my conscience...*

Boy 6 (8 years old): *To choke him.*

Mayor: *And what if he has children as well and is a good person?*

Boy 3 (10 years old): *We could nab him and kick his ass (the boy hits the floor with his hand several times)*

Boy 6 (8 years old): *Let's do nothing. We don't care...why care?*

Boy 2 (9 years old): *To take him to the prison and torture him until he confesses*

Mayor: *And if he dies during torturing and....*

Boy 2 (9 years old): *To peel off his nails*

Boy 5 (7 years old): *We should learn his language and talk to him in his own language.*

This is an example about what could be considered as negative responses in drama that applied for some of the students, mainly boys. These boys here were playing with the dark side of their imaginations, which found expression in machismo. They were making use of the freedom that the imaginative situation endowed them with and of myself for not controlling it. They were playing with the rules, pushing at them, playing their own game, perhaps at my expense.

A political space was created within the aesthetic space and the participants dwelled in both spaces; in the political space as the inhabitants of the island and members of its community and in the aesthetic space as those who act in a theatrical way and create the drama and bring to life an imagined world. Centring the attention in the political space that is created within the aesthetic space one can observe the participants entering a dialogue about an issue that affected their lives. I did not intend to guide the process in such a way so as to make the aesthetic space too pious, where all the islanders accept the stranger at the end and show him compassion and trust. Rather, I intended to facilitate the lesson in such a way so as a situation would be created in which the students worked and acted together, responding to Neelands' observation about the real importance of drama that rests on the

social and artistic engagement, on the experiencing of drama rather than on its outcome (2009).

Under the guise of the meeting of the mayor and the islanders the participants were called together to discuss a real life issue. They sat in the circle, spoke their thoughts, listened to each other without interruptions. This is relevant to what Neelands proposes; that in the collaboration to make theatre together, the participants are modeling democratic living (2009). Different approaches and opinions were heard. Some of them did not change their opinions about the man but in some cases there were shifts in response through the dialogue. Characteristically I will refer to a boy, who in the first workshop, when the students were asked to show in a still image the reactions of the citizens, he froze in a position of laughing at the man. In the discussions he held a very active role and when in the last workshop they were asked to provide their own endings of the story he wrote:

‘One day he went swimming as the weather was very nice. Suddenly a rain shower burst and he was drowned’ (boy, 9).

Apparently in the boy’s mind the naked man continued living his life on the island until this drowning.

I will also refer to the ending that one of the students who expressed violence and aggressiveness in his view of how to handle the issue of the naked man (see second extract of the dialogue) wrote:

'He found himself on another island and they felt sorry for him and they let him stay' (boy, 9).

I will quote the dialogue in which the participants of the city group were engaged to add to the argument on the importance of dialogue and for drama providing a space for the students to be 'seen and heard' (Winston, 2004, p.50).

Mayor: Good evening dear members of this community. As you all know I have invited you here because we have a very serious issue to discuss. I imagine that everyone has seen the stranger... I have met him and he doesn't speak the language and it seems as if he doesn't want to speak at all.

We have to think how we will handle this.

(Everyone is being very serious).

Boy 1: I have an idea. We should approach him.

Mayor: And if he is dangerous... if he harms our children?

Boy 2: We should kill him, spike him with the skewer, kill him with a stone in the head, throw a stone at him to die.

Boy 3: What if he lost his voice?

Mayor: He might be mean...

Boy 2: *We should set a trap for him and if he gets caught, take the gun and boom, boom...*

Boy 3: *Something might have happened to him along the way in the sea.*

Mayor: *Do you mean like a shock. That's why he does not speak?*

But three days have gone by... we have doctors to check on him... Personally I am afraid for my children.

What do you think we should do? (I address two students that do not take part in the dialogue).

Boy 4: *Let's talk to him.*

Mayor: *But he doesn't talk.*

Boy 3: *He does not talk! He does not talk!*

Boy 5: *Kill him?*

Mayor: *On the other hand... I am thinking if he is a good person?*

Girl 1 (9 years old): *Let's tell him to write something.*

Mayor: *We have already told him. We have invited specialists, psychologists, doctors. There is some kind of problem.*

Boy 6: *With signs.*

Girl 2 (9 years old): *Let's think miss... What is left to do?*

Boy 6: *We could search him. Let's say for a mobile phone.*

Mayor: *But he is naked. He didn't bring anything with him. Neither was there anything on his raft.*

Boy 3: *I don't know if this is possible... We could send his fingerprints somewhere...*

Mayor: *But our island is very remote. We do not have special instruments. By the time we send them he might kill one of us.*

Boy 2: *I will knock him down if he kills me.*

Boy 7: *He can't kill me.*

Mayor: *He might not kill you...but how about your child?*

Boy 7: *I don't have a child miss.*

Boy 6: *Oh! I know! Let's set a camera.*

Mayor: *And if we see something we cannot handle?*

Girl 2: *We should put a baby and be outside and see if he hurts this baby.*

Boy 5: *We should stalk him.*

Girl 1: *Let's give him clothes first of all.*

Mayor: *Yes but if we stalk him... Do you mean let him wander in the town? And if he does something that we cannot prevent?*

Boy 6: *We should set a camera.*

Boy: *We should follow him all the time.*

Girl 3: *We should build tall walls in our houses so as he can't go in.*

Mayor: *And live hemmed in, in our own town?*

Boy 8 (never talked before): *I know, I know, I know. We should build a wall and put him in.*

Mayor: *But if he is a good person... Crying shame!*

Boy 1: *We should put a dummy just to see what he will do to that.*

Girl 3: *The best thing we can do is stalk him.*

The above incidents are indicative of how drama can be a political arena that is constructed in order to dwell on issues of value conflict (Winston, 2004). Arendt theorizes the public realm as 'a space of appearance' and the 'world we hold in common' as necessary for the constitution of our public identities (d'Entreves, 1992). In a very small way, the fictional context provides them also with the physical context in which action can arise. In this case the students were introduced to the idea of a public meeting where the Mayor and the islanders met to discuss, hear and be heard about an issue that concerned them and take decisions that will affect their lives. The institutions of the public sphere and the practices within that become the context of the students' activities through the fictional world.

Many of the children in the above moment did not listen to one another and did not build upon what other students said, but they started to sound their own ideas while other ideas were inevitably heard. Some ideas are more thoughtful than others (see comments made by boy 3 and girl 1). Many of their ideas were realistic (boy 6) and reflective of the fear the story suggested

the citizens felt (boy 8); others were more an expression of transgressive behaviour, overzealous machismo (see for instance comments made by boy 2). The discussion and the way it developed may be messy but one can detect hopeful developments if one considers how the drama developed after that discussion.

In the beginning of the drama, one of the first exercises that we did was to present in still images the way the islanders reacted when they first saw the naked man. In their still images students threatened to throw rocks at him, laughed at him, held some objects against him, showed that they were afraid of him, ran away, showed their menace. None of the twelve participants was positive towards him. After the meeting with the mayor some of the islanders appeared more considerate. Many of those, who previously held a negative stance towards the stranger, raised alternative viewpoints and posed problems for the group to think of. They appeared to have become more aware of different alternatives and choices that they hadn't considered before. In experiencing the dramatic situation they got a glimpse of how the same situation might be perceived and handled in different ways. The dialogue and the image work that followed, in both cases, exemplified how in the context of dramatic playing, students recognized their privilege and rehearsed solutions to societal problems (Mitchel, 2011).

The above incident is also relevant to Mouffe's theory on the political as a space of power, conflict and antagonism to which I referred earlier. In more detail, Mouffe explains that to view democratic politics as resting upon compromises among interests and or on deliberation about common views is restricting as it does not recognize the dimension of pluralism that is

constitutive of modern democracy. During the discussion with the mayor the students in role as islanders presented conflicting views as to what they should do with the intruder. After the discussion the students formed groups of four and presented their version of what was decided in that meeting. Their improvisations were as diverse as the suggestions the children provided in the previous dialogue and they were both positive and negative in terms of the outcome, thus confirming and reflecting Mouffe's point.

The development of the story of *The Magic Pillows* with the capital group started when the participants were asked to write individually some of the unfair and cruel rules that the king legislated. Some of them were:

-Laughing and music is forbidden

-Whoever enters the palace must kneel down in front of the king

-Whoever mocks the king will be slaughtered

-Sleep at 7 o'clock otherwise you will be killed

-All your possessions must be given to the king and you must never help anyone

-Do not shower

-It is forbidden to eat vegetables

-Watching television is forbidden

The rules signified how each participant conceived of unfairness and cruelty. With these symbolic pieces of writing, unfairness and cruelty are equated with: deprivation of life's joys in the first rule, submissiveness and humiliation in the second rule, tyranny and unjust use of power in the third rule, enforcement and terrorism in the fourth rule, greediness and prohibition of any acts of condolence or sympathy towards others in the fifth rule, deprivation of basic and other human needs in the sixth, seventh and eighth rules.

Respectively, some of the rules that the students of the provincial school gave were the following:

-It is forbidden to go to the toilet

-No fiestas

-The poor must kneel and worship the rich when they see them in the streets

-Whoever eats more than one meal per day will be slaughtered

-No one must be happy

-Whoever enters the private area of the king, will be arrested, his clothes removed and whipped while hanging from the ceiling.

As the drama progressed the citizens overthrew the king and were called upon to write in role as citizens the new rules of their city. Some of the rules they wrote were the following:

-Everyone to have his own opinion

-Everyone to get involved with anything that he wants to or likes to

- To vote whatever we want
- The children to teach their teachers how to be playful
- Everyone can do whatever he wants except evil
- It is forbidden to steal
- To celebrate and not pay taxes
- The new pillows of the citizens must be really, really soft
- To be able to vote for our king and his advisors
- To redistribute the king's riches

Respectively, some of the rules that the participants of the urban school wrote were:

- To shower every day
- Everyone should party after 7:00 pm
- The children can play whenever they want
- All the children should go to school
- The children can play, eat ice-cream, laugh and be able to do whatever was before forbidden

These series of activities indicate the utopian potential of the fairy tale and fantasy as Bloch has explained it (Zipes, 1995), here delineated through the development of the drama. The latter believed that the world of the fairy tale contains 'a corrective' where the utopian perspective comes to be a critical reflection of the everyday and discloses the capacity for autonomy. Fairy stories are seen not 'as substitutes for action but as indicators' as the stories parallel the processes through which humans use reason to fulfill the wishes of fantasy (ibid, p.138). Through their short improvisations and their writing in role, the participants expressed their wishes, projected how they wanted to change and transform that world they were living in. Fantasy enables utopian and hence political thinking.

For Bloch, building concrete utopias is possible through the recovery of autonomy, which can be reawakened through estrangement. The magic of the fairy tale can estrange participants from the everyday as it is combined with dreams and wishes (Zipes, 1995, pp. 138-139). In this specific case, the utopian consciousness was awakened through the students in the form of the citizens' wishful projections which indicated the possibility of a better world.

Lastly, another important idea that is supported by Bloch and which is very relevant to this thesis is that he sees dissatisfaction as a condition that kindles the utopian impulse (ibid). Particularly, then, beyond the rise of hope and wishful projections, the dissatisfaction with the existing conditions and unhappy lives of the citizens drove the students in role playfully to project their utopian visions for a happier world. Within the fiction they were able to bring these to life through their own powers. This idea is also connected with Prendergast's argument to which I have referred earlier, that in drama it is the

imaginative living in dystopias that induces imaginative living in utopias (2011). In this case the miserable and oppressive life that the citizens were living under the rule of the king made them overthrow him and start a new life.

A characteristic of the political identity, of the agent is the capacity to take a choice and be responsible for that choice. During the fourth workshop the students were asked to take a place in the space (see appendix 1, 4(11)) to denote their decision on what course of action they decided to take about the king's laws. We imagined a diagonal line across the space we worked in. The one end of the line represented the palace and the other end represented the citizens' houses. The participants had to show physically their choice, either to resist and overthrow the king, by standing close to the palace, to take no action by standing close to their houses or denote that they had not yet decided what to do by standing somewhere in the middle.

After the participants had arranged themselves in the line they were asked to give reasons for their decisions. A girl very close to the citizens' houses explained that she stood there: *'Because we certainly are not going to make it. They have guards, they have power. There is no way we can make it'* (12/3/09). Another boy agreed: *'They have too many guards'*. Close to the other end of the line stood a boy who passionately commented that *'I stood here because I want to try. If I die I will die for everyone's good and I will try'*. A girl who stood somewhere in the middle explained that *'we are not sure of what will happen'*. When I asked her if she wanted to go but something was stopping her, she replied: *'Yes, because if I go and I get killed I will do nothing. But if I make it...'*.

Benefitting from Sharon Bailin's ideas of how critical thinking might be understood in drama education, I would like to provide an analysis of how the above incident can be a moment of critical thinking. For Bailin, critical thinking 'involves thinking through problematic situations about what to believe or how to act where the thinker makes reasoned judgments that embody the attributes of quality thinking' (2006, p.146). Critical thinking involves three dimensions; *critical challenges*, *intellectual resources* and *critically thoughtful responses*. I will explain each one in accordance to the specific case. By critical challenges, Bailin refers to the tasks, questions or problems created in the context for critical thinking, which takes the form of solving a problem in role drama. In the case under investigation, the students take the role of citizens who live under the rule of a nasty king and experience what this life is like. Intellectual resources involve both background knowledge and the critical attributes, meaning attitudes or habits of mind, which we draw upon to respond to particular challenges. To this I could refer to the students' commitment to the task at hand and the willingness they were showing to consider the views of their classmates and maybe even be influenced by those in their eventual decision making. Critically thoughtful responses refer to the responses that indicate that the appropriate intellectual resources have been employed in the challenge at hand, for instance in a discussion. To this last dimension, Bailin insists on the need for a tangible response that might too be a discussion with the students. In the specific case, the incident that I have described above could be thought of as a critically thoughtful response in the sense that the participants' argumentation connoted a sense of intention and responsibility for their choices that are characteristics of agency.

In considering Bailin's argument that 'critical thinking is contextual and always takes place in response to certain challenges' where 'the thinker must draw on a range of intellectual recourses in order to respond to these challenges, including knowledge, strategies and habits of mind' (2006, p.149) it can, then, be argued that drama can provide these.



However, I need to add that I am not proposing that the above instances are evidence of high-level critical thinking. I am arguing instead that the *aesthetic community* can provide opportunities to develop critical thinking, which are above all pleasurable. This issue of pleasure is closely connected to the idea of utopia that I have discussed throughout this study. The children were imagining and enjoying the dramatic process and the story together and this kind of beautiful experience is important per se, as through playful, enjoyable fantasy players can 'experience the utopian sensation stressed by Schiller' about 'how life feels at its best' (Winston, 2010, p. 76).





In the last workshop I encouraged the participants of the capital group to work on the picture book of the story of the 'Magic Pillows' as they were very enthusiastic about the idea. This could also be a very good way for the students of one group to share their work with another group, something that in the end, alas, was not possible.

After a discussion in the circle the participants decided on the important moments of the story that should be included in the picture book. I stressed the fact that it was important to think a lot about what should be included because the picture book should tell the entire story to the one who is viewing

it without him/her having to read the whole story that Trivizas had written. The students considered it important to include pictures of the nightmares of the citizens; a picture of the king Arpatilaus; pictures of what the citizens looked like; a picture of the green book that contained the recipe for the nightmarish pillows; a picture of the green book that contained the recipe for the nightmarish pillows; pictures of the palace magician. I wrote on a large sheet of paper their suggestions and, either alone or in pairs, they could choose what to draw. I also provided them with different materials to draw, such as pencil, pastels, coloured pencils and markers. With a minimum of disagreement everyone was in charge of their own contribution.

These are some of their drawings with a short title of what they depict.

 <p>The palace's magician (girl, 10 years old) (markers)</p>	 <p>One of the citizens (girl, 10 years old) (pastel)</p>
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 <p>The green book (boy, 9 years old) (pastel)</p>	 <p>King Arpatilaus observing with his gold telescope (girl, 9 years old) (markers)</p>
 <p>The pillows!!! Boy and girl (10 years old) (marker)</p>	 <p>The mattress weighs down the king (boy, 10 years old) (marker and pastel)</p>

I read this as a moment of co-operation, where the students work together towards a collective goal and I would like to discuss the importance of this moment with reference to the recent work of Richard Sennett *Together*, which is a treatise on how we can develop our capacity for co-operation. Sennett explains co-operation as ‘an exchange in which the participants benefit from the encounter...all social animals... cooperate to accomplish

what they can't do alone' (2012, p.5). He places emphasis on the demanding and difficult kind of co-operation where people with different or conflicting interests or people that don't understand each other might engage in and the skills that can be learned in order to sustain it.

An *aesthetic community* can nurture this human capability of co-operation because it continuously sets the task to do something together and, as Sennett claims, repetition serves to improve and sustain co-operation (Sennett, 2012, p.12). What is more important, though, to move a step further from Sennett, is not only that an *aesthetic community* can function as an environment for face to face interactions but also the fact that there is pleasure in the activity itself that can provide a base for the development of co-operation. In the above moment, I have chosen the activity of making the picture book because most of the students were excited about it. They themselves decided on the important moments in the story that they should include in it and each chose to draw the moment he/she preferred. Again they could choose to work on their own or in pairs and with the material that they preferred. There was no desire for homogenization, which Sennett critiques when it comes to co-operation (2012). Finding pleasure in the activity itself is, I believe, the way that co-operation will not become such a difficult task.

In our last meeting, the participants of the city group had to work in groups and present four scenes to show how islanders had dealt with the issue of the stranger in their island. There was a very interesting moment where one group presented their version of what the teacher of the island

says to his students about the stranger. In this scene only the teacher talked asking his students to write twenty times in their exercise book the phrase '*Do not approach the stranger*'. This practice of 'giving lines' is very occasionally followed today by teachers as a detention for something a student did to remind him/her not to do it again or something he/she must learn to do. This is again a sign of how the participants conceived of the relations of the older over the younger, of the one who has power over the powerless.

In the same exercise that I did with the students of the urban school they positioned themselves in a similar way. The teacher was played by the oldest girl in the class and the students by two younger and much shorter students. The choice of the teacher being the physically taller and larger in size signed their understanding of authority. At the same time the teacher was again the only one who talked in this scene, asking her students to write about their feelings for the stranger and suggesting a visit to the mayor of the city to discuss with him this issue. The teacher addressing her students exemplified what she would do. These were her words: '*If it was for me I would write and say to the mayor that it doesn't seem that this man is very nice, and he is not like us and he might harm us and especially me, he might harm my children. He might come one day in my house and take them, hide them somewhere*'.

The above moments are practical examples of the 'smaller acts of fascism in everyday life' to adopt one of the phrases that the Greek director Giorgos Lanthimos used to refer to forms of unfreedom imposed on people in the everyday context, during an interview he gave about his award-winning movie 'Dogtooth'. In the movie, a father, a mother and their three young adult children live in an isolated country estate just outside the city. The property is

surrounded by a huge fence. The three children have never left the house. They are taught, entertained, get bored according to their father's instructions without any other experiences. They are kept unaware of the outside world. Any word that comes from beyond their family abode is assigned a new meaning. Hence the airplanes that fly above the house are just toys and zombies are small yellow flowers (Voulgaris, 2009) (author's translation).

In parallel, then, what the students were signing through their short improvisations is the imposition, the act of enforcement. They were making a political statement within the role bringing to the fore issues about the moral authority of the teacher that can mislead and miseducate. This is for me a moment of thinking critically. Their improvisation represented at a micro-level what Lanthimos represented in his movie, about the misuse of authority; in the movie this authority was represented by the parent while in the group the authority was represented by the teacher.

At the end of the last workshop the participants of the city group were asked to write on a piece of paper their own version of the story's ending. I need to remind the reader at this point that all the twelve participants in role as the islanders were negatively disposed against the man when we began to explore the story. In their pieces of writing the participants gave the following endings. Four of them showed how the course of the story as we know it changed. For example two boys showed how the fisherman influenced the islanders to take him to the island and treat him as a citizen of the island. The islanders followed the fisherman and gave him food and clothes and accepted

him as a friend. A girl explained how the teacher of the island proposed to hold a referendum where everyone voted for the stranger to go to school; *'Thereby, the stranger became a real citizen. He got married, he had children and he grew old, calm and happy in the island'*.

Four other pieces of writing showed a more positive turn on the story than the ending of the book. In two cases the man managed to return home with the help of the islanders. Specifically a girl noted *'The people of the island made a small boat put him in and with the mayor's decision he sent along with the traveler four men the fisherman to drive. So, when they encountered his civilization they left him there and left. From that day on the islanders took measures'*. In two other cases the man returned back home after many troubles. A girl wrote: *'Then the man reached another island but they send him away. After he passed from seven islands and was drawn away then to the eighth island there were his parents and so they recognized, everyone, that he was the son they were looking for and so they've lived happily ever after'*. Finally the last two participants wrote about how the islanders at the end killed the fisherman as well and about an islander who disagreed with the fisherman's position to help the man and killed the naked man with a rock.

Nussbaum has written about imagination's contribution to the political development of a person that must start at an early stage in life. She focuses on arts and specifically on literature and its power to cultivate capacities of judgment and sensitivity that should be expressed in the choices a citizen makes. For her, the arts exemplify possibilities of the things that might happen and this knowledge of possibilities is valuable in the political life of a person.

The arts can promote involvement and sympathetic understanding for the lives of those who are different and this is salient for the decisions we take as citizens (2008).

Again, in a very small way, these were tantalizing responses from some of the participants that exemplify this judgment and responsibility that Nussbaum talks about - a slight indication that aesthetic experience and political concerns can work together.

Afterthought

In this afterthought, I wish to engage in a reflexive process of my own readings of the data. I will offer some final thoughts on the preceding data analysis and on my own praxis. The term reflexive is used instead of reflective to denote a kind of self-inspection in what relates to one's biases, theoretical dispositions, preferences (Schwandt, 2007), and to draw attention to the relations between processes of knowledge production and the involvement of the knowledge producer (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). This section includes thoughts from the discussions I had with my critical friend.

One of the issues that I must grapple with is whether and to what extent *aesthetic communities* were actually formed in the four groups that participated in the research. An *aesthetic community* will not necessarily be formed every time the participants in each group come together to do drama. It is an imagined community that does not always exist and it is formed only when participants share an aesthetic interest in the drama work. At the same time, though, every *aesthetic community* should be small, distinct and self-sufficient (Bauman, 2001). After assessing this issue of the formation of an *aesthetic community* with my critical friend, we concluded that not every group formed an *aesthetic community*. For instance, the city group did not. The participants in this group, as my critical friend pointed out, did not manage to work beyond their friendship clusters that were most of the time gender specific. Most of the time my own intervention was necessary to group them randomly and this meant that the community was not self-sufficient. However, even if the participants of the city group did not form an *aesthetic community*, a kind of aesthetic connectedness brought them together to work on the story

of *The Island*, discernible from their willingness to participate in most of the workshop activities. This is significant in itself for, as Abbs puts it, in the arts we should be primarily concerned with the establishment of a frame in which aesthetic engagement will be released (1994).

Earlier in this thesis, I proposed the need for our drama pedagogies to be highly play-ful as play and games re-develop our bodies' capabilities that 'atrophy in their engagement with the environment' (Boal cited in Thompson, 2006, p.6). As both myself and my critical friend observed, in all four groups, participants mentioned as one of the reasons that they chose to do drama the fact that they play and that drama is fun. Following Csikszentmihalyi and his ideas on flow, which I analysed in the literature review, the playful element that permeated the whole research was one of the key factors that helped sustain the *aesthetic community* where and when it was developed. *Flow*, that is playfulness, motivated the participants to play the political. *Flow* provided many opportunities for action (1975) (see for instance the responses of the students from the urban school, in 3.2.2 (1)). This experience of play, I would suggest, *enchants* education for democracy. As Del Nevo puts it, enchantment 'is the possibility of being captivated by the beautiful' and it also has to do with being simultaneously in another world as well as in this one (2011, pp. 3-4). We come to enchantment through art; drama/theatre education educes. Educating carries the meaning not just of informing but of calling us 'into our personal potential collectively over time' (ibid, p. 17) and drama/theatre education educes as it points to us, through the practical freedom that it endows us with, how to live differently (ibid).

Additionally two participants' responses point to enchantment as an essential ingredient in our pedagogies. The first is encapsulated in one of the new rules that the citizens established after the ejection of the king: 'students must teach their teachers how to be playful' (girl, 10 years old, capital group). The second is in the recipe that we collectively made for the pillows that cause sweet dreams when the participants added a letter from the Minister of Education to announce the closure of the schools (see 3.2.2 (1)).

I would like now to discuss further the decision of the head-teacher to terminate the project early due to parental pressure. During the phone call with me, as I mentioned earlier, she explicitly mentioned that 'the children of lawyers, doctors and members of the parliament attend that school' (she also used the expression 'elite') and that she didn't want to displease these parents. I see this intervention of a powerful group of parents to determine what happens in school, as an example of neo-liberalism and its drive to create school hierarchies.

In Cyprus there is no parental choice with regard to the school a child attends. Rather, each child is entitled only to attend the school that is closest to the address the parents give as their permanent residence. The claim made by the head that 'the elite' attended her specific school is contestable as I have actually since worked for a year (during the years 2010 and 2011) in two schools, each of which is situated just 1km from this one, and neither of which allowed parental intervention to this extent. The stated agenda of this head, I would argue, is interwoven with the educational agendas of capitalism in degrading and capitalizing humanity in a manner that relates principally to social-class (Hill and Kumar, 2009). Harvey has explained neoliberalism as

‘...in the first instance a theory that proposes that human well-being can best be advanced by liberating individual entrepreneurial freedoms and skills within an institutional framework characterized by strong, private property rights, free markets and free trade’ (2005, cited in Grant, 2009)

Neo-liberalism in education seeks to place all human action in the domain of the market (ibid). Education that does not follow this logic is thence considered to be a ‘threat’. Grant talks about ‘delight in learning’ as that which turns learning from being mechanical, pointless and disenchanting to something that is delightful. The neoliberal he claims sees ‘delight in learning or the joy of play’ as ‘a challenge or threat’ (Grant, 2009, p. xii). Ira Shor writes that democratic dialogue in classrooms often has to confront school authorities, students, teacher and parents who oppose it and defend more traditional methods (1993). In this sense, an educational project such as mine would be unwelcome for ideological reasons that stretch beyond the inconvenience of the timing with an end of term performance. It is also notable that my project was evidently inconvenient for all the other groups but none of them cancelled it or were subjected to this kind of parental pressure.

One of the interesting points from the fieldwork to look at is that of space. The work done with the urban and the provincial school took place in two public primary schools while the work done with the capital and the city group took place in the space of two private theatre organizations. I observed

that the differences between public and private places did not create any real differences in how the project developed in each of the spaces. In other words, the actual space in which the project was developed did not prove to be a defining factor to the project. Rather, I would argue, the space as transformed by the fiction was a defining factor for its development. Holdsworth, following Lefebvre, explains that spaces 'are never empty but always loaded with meanings actively produced and re-circulated through dynamic social spaces' (2007, p. 296). Space, then, regulates behaviour but there is the possibility for 'affective spatial resistance to occur that generates its own space through live encounters that re-inflect the social and political meanings of space that are present' (ibid). This means that different people and different groups of people can attribute different values, meanings and uses to the same space which can as a result become unfixed and fluid and 'a potential space for democracy' (Watson, 2004 cited in Holdsworth, 2007, p. 296). It is not the space then that matters but rather what we do with that space, and in this project the idea was to transform the *place* in which the workshops happened into a public *space* in which to play democracy. My evidence, I believe, demonstrates that this was in effect possible, despite the fact that the *aesthetic community* was not always sustained.

Reflecting back on Butler's theory on parody as Cahill has analyzed it in the context of drama/theatre education, I have come to support her theory that naturalism often 'places a tyranny over the fiction' whereas parody is useful in 'detection and rupture through the use of exaggeration and distortion' (2012, pp.414, 423). In my own project, the story of *The Magic Pillows* worked with parody while the story of *The Island* was more naturalistic in its approach.

In more detail, *The Magic Pillows* is a story that parodies authoritarian regimes through using funny names for the rulers and through a reversal of order, where the king and his followers learn their lesson by experiencing everything they themselves did to the citizens. Parody, I have argued, gave the chance to the participants to enact their own utopia and imagine a new world. On the contrary, *The Island*, working on a more naturalistic basis, did not allow for the same kind of distancing and detachments that *The Magic Pillows* did. The fact that what happens in *The Island* could conceivably happen in real life did not leave much space for comic distortion and rupture as was the case with *The Magic Pillows*. The choice of the material to work with will inevitably affect the way the drama develops. In this sense what matters is not so much the referential content of a drama as the process followed.

I must comment rather critically on the actual time period that I chose to do the fieldwork. In 2008 I was living in England from where I tried to take all the necessary steps to get permission from the Ministry of Education and Culture to do my fieldwork in two primary schools. The length of time that this would take was something I had unfortunately not taken into account. The procedure took several months, longer than I had anticipated. I finally obtained permission at the end of January 2009 and in mid February 2009 I actually started the fieldwork. As I had to leave the schools earlier than planned, I chose to do the fieldwork again in the same year, whereas the ideal would have been to do it in the following year at a more opportune time to avoid end of term performances. This however, was not possible, as I needed to work full time the next year in order to support my family financially. After I

had completed work with the capital and the city group, and had looked at my data, I did, however, feel that there was enough there to analyze and add practical substance to my theoretical argument, despite the foreshortening of my proposed series of workshops.

Looking back now at my own position in a project that aimed to be democratic, I feel that I did work with the participants to assess their interests, aspirations and abilities, re-shaping my initial plans always in the light of the previous workshop. Attempting to work from within a critical pedagogy tradition, which sees the teachers and students as partners, I feel that I genuinely tried hard to encourage the students to participate and affect what was happening in the drama classroom. However, I do, of course, recognize myself as the power wielder and authority figure in the classroom and I always accepted the responsibility that such a position bears (Monchinski, 2008). In this sense, the project was also an opportunity for me to explore my own relationship to power and to realize that, although critical pedagogy offers opportunities to realize how politics, power, responsibility and commitment work both on us and through us, this will always happen within a frame in which unequal relations of power are constantly in play (Giroux, 2011, pp. 81-82).

Finally beyond my role as researcher I am also a primary teacher and this affected the relationships that I developed after I left the field both with the teachers and the participants. Despite the fact that the end of year school performances had been a barrier in all the four cases to the way the fieldwork was developed, I was very sensitive to the importance the students attached to them and made sure that I attended two of them to which I was invited. The

students there came over and welcomed me, hugging me and asking me how I found their performances. At the same time, I had developed personal relationships with three of the class teachers and with the two directors as I also understood that, despite the fact that they didn't know me, they had granted me much of their time and had supported my fieldwork as much as they could, even though I had regrettably found myself trying to manage everything at what must have seemed like the last minute. For this I was and remain truly grateful to them.

Conclusion

To sum up, through this thesis I have tried to examine whether an aesthetic communicative nexus that the students are encouraged to form within drama/theatre and the artistic actions within that nexus can foster the development of the identity of the 'political body', that is, of the democratic personality, of promoting agency. I have focused on the body and have argued for an embodied drama/theatre education as a locus where the aesthetic, as an alternative kind of knowing, plays. More specifically, I have argued for the potential of forming another kind of being through a different understanding of the body. The lived body, the fact that we are and have a body leaves the space open for exploring the emancipatory promise of habitus, where habitus ceases to be condemned to a purely conservative role. Rather, within the *aesthetic communities* and through the artistic actions within these communities, we can approach and start to form our democratic habitus.

In terms of methodology, I followed action research and arts-infused research to collect my data. Four research groups participated in the research project.

This small-scale research project did not – could not - aim at any kind of proof; rather it aimed to explore and illustrate what the beginnings of teaching for democracy through drama/theatre education might look. Thus from my readings of the data that I collected I cannot claim that the students had become 'political bodies'. In one sense this must always be the case, because democracy and identity are to be understood as works in progress

and never finalized. I can hazard, however, that the participants were starting to form a *modus operandi* towards more democratic forms and I would like to use a metaphor that Nicholson uses to discuss this further. Nicholson uses Schechner's ideas when talking about two aspects of performance practice that is of 'transformation' and of 'transportation'. 'Transformation' affects a permanent change where 'the outcome is immediate, predetermined and predictable'. Schechner associates transformation with ritual. 'Transportation' is different in the sense that it is not supposed to be lasting and is less fixed. In 'transportation', 'performers are 'taken somewhere', actors are even temporarily transformed, but they are returned more or less to their starting places at the end of the drama or performance'. This does not mean that more permanent transformations cannot happen in the long term and, as Schechner asserts, 'a series of transportation performances achieve a transformation' (cited in Nicholson, 2005, p. 12). Following these ideas, the participants in this project were, I would argue, transported within the drama process but not transformed, as change happens in the long term and must take place gradually. This project would have been assessed differently if it had run for longer, where transportations in the long run can leave the space open for transformation. Besides, as Shor explains, the transformation of teachers and students from authoritarian to democratic habits is a long term project (1993).

I consider one of the successes of this project the fact that its ideas were put into practice in a real-life context despite the difficulties I encountered and this is what Mary Warnock means when she says that she finds it depressing when people spend too much time talking about how to

change school and how to make things better. She believes rather that it is the educators' responsibility to educate children whatever the circumstances might be (Warnock, 1981).

In what relates to the *aesthetic community*, despite the exploratory nature of the work and the elusive character of the phenomenon investigated, I find the work of the *aesthetic community* promising in its potential to develop democratic sensibilities. It has denoted in a very small way how the development of identity can be based on practical action and how it can be formed in relation with others. This commitment to a community and the chance to participate and define its fate is for me an actual practice of democracy.

Limitations and Further Research

Despite the fact that the groups never met, both in the case of the urban and the provincial school and the capital and the city group each group knew about the existence of the other and many times the participants of the one group would ask me about the participants of the other. Some participants were expecting to meet them, as I had discussed with them from the very beginning the possibility of meeting another group participating in the same research project. However, I consider the fact that the two groups –the urban with the provincial school and the capital with the city group- were never able to meet as one of the limitations of this project as I believe the process of two groups finding ways to share their work and their actual meeting up would help to explore further the ideas of this project, especially in

what concerns the issue of pleasure in learning and the drama workshop as the space where different groups meet and speak about their interest in their work and play together.

At the same time I am aware that this project has been of a very small-scale, despite the fact that it dwells on big issues such as democracy and the formation of identities. The aim, though, was never to provide any definite answers on how to reach these aims but to explore what the beginnings of teaching for democracy through drama/theatre education might look like.

Although this research project was of small scale, it has pointed the way towards further areas of research. For example, I would be interested in repeating the research and actually bringing two groups together and exploring this interaction between them and the form that this might take. I would also be very interested in extending further the idea of the *aesthetic community* as a space to explore issues that concern our common lives but this time involve in the research two groups that are culturally different. One of the aims of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the year 2011-2012 is *'the development of culture of peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and cooperation between Greek-Cypriots and Turkish-Cypriots aiming at liberation from occupation and reunification of our country and people'*. As it is added, this aim should be considered to be in force until liberation and reunification (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2011 author's translation). In this sense, a Greek-Cypriot group and a Turkish-Cypriot group could participate in a long-term project with the aim to examine whether peaceful coexistence, mutual respect and cooperation could be promoted through drama/theatre. Relevant work has been done by Shifra Schonmann in a project using dramatic

representation as a meeting ground for oppositional forces in society where the classroom became the place where Jewish and Arab children met and dealt with issues of peaceful coexistence (see Schonmann, 1996).

Furthermore, in the present project, the two groups were given three stories to work with and they were asked to choose the one that they wanted most to work with. It would be valuable to examine the form that this project could take when the stories, the content is chosen from the outset by the participants themselves. In the present work, due to the short time available, I had to bring the stories myself. Encouraging the students to bring the material from which to start - this might be pictures, songs, stories, texts - I could involve them more deeply in the project in a way that would accord with the wider focus on democracy.

What I would find intriguing is to explore more in a longer-term project the potential for using arts-infused research, which influenced my methodology only slightly. For instance, there could be the possibility of making a short movie or a documentary presenting the work of the two groups and their meeting, in the making of which the participants themselves would hold an active role. The possibility of collaborating with a visual or a media artist in this kind of work would be both challenging and exciting.

The ideas of this research project are more suggestive than prescriptive. In this sense, my work might interest educators, drama/theatre pedagogues and/or researchers who are concerned with the place of the body in drama /theatre education, with teaching for democracy, with promoting agency, with connections that might be drawn between community and

identity within drama/theatre education and/or with the aesthetic and its connection to democracy.

Finally, this project aimed to militate within a wider effort for the development of a democratic culture and the creation of a new sensibility that has to do with life in a democracy. Dewey and Freire, two figures whose ideas have influenced this thesis strongly, believe that education plays only a part in remaking society and this part is not the dominant one. Dewey notes that schools cannot 'in any literal sense be the builders of a new social order' (1993 cited in Monchinski, 2008, p. 38). Freire on his part writes that 'only political action in society can make social transformation, not critical study in the classroom alone' (1987, cited in Monchinski, 2008, p.38). However, drama/theatre education has a strong part to play in endowing the students with democratic habits. As Wiens and Coulter write 'education adds the dispositions, skills and understandings to make democracy that 'infinite improbability' even imaginable' (2008, p.298). The challenge then for drama/theatre education is to integrate the aesthetic and the political and provide the context in which students prepare for political action in society.

Appendix 1

Urban School

First Workshop (17/2/09 and 19/2/09)

Games and Improvisations to strengthen the group cohesiveness and introduce them to the language we will be using

17/02/09

1(1) Introduction

Meeting in the circle- I introduce myself and explain to the students once again what we will be doing during the next workshops.

1(2) Game: Zip Zap Boing

Players stand in a circle. A person sends an imaginative force to another person. The person who receives the force has three choices; to pass it to a person that stands next to him/her by calling zip, to pass it to anyone other than those standing next to him/her by calling zap or to send the force back to the sender by calling boing. The aim is to be highly concentrated and go fast.

1(3) Ball Game

The players stand in a circle and throw the ball to each other. Every time the ball changes hands we count. The aim is not to miss the ball and reach number 50 in counting.

1(4) Following instructions:

The students are asked to do what they are commanded. Some examples are:

- Walk in the space (slowly, quickly, backwards)
- Jump
- Run in slow motion
- Find a person, stop and shake hands
- Walk, Walk and hug in two (leading to the next improvisation)

1(5) Narrating an incident in an imaginative language

Students in two name themselves as A and B. A has to narrate to B an incident that happened to him/her in an imaginative language and the opposite. At the end students gather a circle and share their thoughts. (They come to discuss how we communicate by using our bodies, our facial expressions, sounds, movements and how these function as signs).

1(6) Simultaneous clapping

The students in a circle are asked to focus on each other and keep eye contact so as to manage to clap simultaneously without been given a signal.

19/2/09

1(7) Discussion in the circle

(Because many parents changed their minds about their children's participation as they thought this would take time from their end of year performance, many of the activities planned could not take place. We spend some time with the teacher of the class explaining to the students what we would be doing again during the next workshops and how this wouldn't affect their rehearsals for the end of year performance).

1(8) Game: A murderer between us

Players walk in the space with their eyes closed. A volunteer takes the role of the murderer. He/She also keeps the eyes closed at all times during the game. As the players walk in the space and meet someone they have to ask: 'Do I live? If the other person asks the same we continue to walk in the space. If we meet a person that in the question 'Do I live?' does not reply, we need to count up to five and then fall to the ground making a very loud noise. All the people that have been murdered have to stand in a line at one end of the room who by whispering they try to help the other people in the game that

haven't been murdered to save themselves. Eyes must be shut at all times. Players are only allowed to open their eyes after they have been murdered.

2nd Workshop (24/2/09 and 26/2/09)

Choice of the material to work with

24/2/09

2 (1) Introduction:

In a circle we remember what we have done the previous time. I explain to the students that I will be giving them three stories and they will have to choose which one they like the most and prefer to work with during the next sessions.

2(2) Working with the first story *The Magic Pillows*

Game: The bear and the woodcutters.

A volunteer takes the role of the bear and the rest of the class, become the woodcutters. The woodcutters are on the way to their house after a long day in the woods. At a moment they meet a bear who is hungry and dangerous. The task is for everyone to lie down and stay motionless. The bear can do anything she wants with them. Whoever moves is eaten by the bear and he/she then becomes a bear as well.

We then sit in the circle and I narrate something from the story

Narration in the circle:

‘Once upon a time in a far- away city with no sky, a hateful ruler, Arpatilaus The First, ruled. This ruler had twelve crowns. Every month he wore another crown. He also had a golden telescope and a feather from a raven. I will first tell you what he did with the telescope and then I will tell you what he did with the feather of the raven. He took the golden telescope, he went up to the highest tower of the palace that had twelve windows and from there he watched closely all the territory. If he saw anything that he liked, he called his guards that ran with their motorcycles, grabbed it, put it in a golden bag and took it to him. Now that I have told you what he did with the golden telescope I will tell you what he did with the feather of the raven. With the feather, he wrote rules. Not usual laws though. He wrote awful and cruel laws...’

When the narration stops the students are given paper and pencil to write down one of the laws they believe Arpatilaus wrote which we read out loud in the circle.

Narration in the circle:

‘But those weren’t the only laws. Arpatilaus has written so many laws that the poor citizens sometimes forgot some of them. It is not weird then that the citizens disliked the king. Arpatilaus then decided to give to the citizens new pillows to wheedle them because they were so displeased with him. But these weren’t ordinary pillows.... They caused nightmares...’

The narration stops at this moment and I explain to the students that if they choose this story we will explore what the citizens’ lives were like when they

were ruled by Arpatilaus, we will see the moments they started having nightmares, the way they send away the hateful king and the way they then ruled their city.

2 (3) Working with the second story *The Island*

Game: Fruit salad (from Winston and Tandy, 2001, p. 2-3)

1. Chairs are placed in a circle, with one chair in the middle. There must be no spare chairs.
2. Children sit on the chairs and the teacher goes around the circle naming each child in turn apple, orange pear; apple, orange, pear etc.
3. The child (or teacher) in the central chair begins the game by calling out either apple, orange, pear or fruit salad. If she calls out apple, all those children named apple must leave their chair and find a different one. She may also call out apples and pears, oranges and pears, etc. At the words fruit salad, all children must swap chairs.
4. The aim of the game is for whoever is in the centre to enter the circle and to be replaced by the player who fails to find a chair, whereupon the game starts again.
5. None of the players is allowed either to move into a chair directly next to them or back into the chair they have just vacated.

Then we repeat a variation of it in role: you are here to rescue all but one of the players from a zone of war, disease and / or famine. This time there is a hidden time limit to the game, revealed only at its end. Whoever is in the middle when the game ends is to be abandoned to their own devices.

Students sit in the circle and I show them the following picture



Picture of the raft and the sea

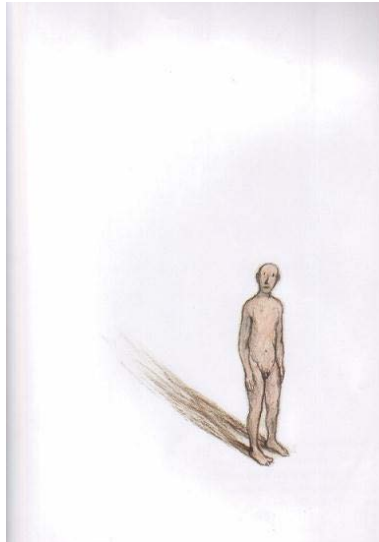
Discussion in the circle:

The students share their thoughts about what do they think this story is about.

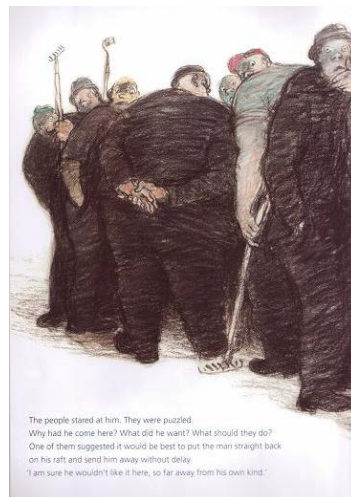
Narration in the circle:

'One morning, the people of the island found a man on the beach, where fate and ocean currents had washed his raft ashore. When he saw them coming he stood up...He wasn't like them...'

I show them the pictures:



The man



The people of the island

Short scenes:

The students are asked to present short scenes to show the way the people of the island reacted when they saw the man.

Narration in the circle:

'The people stared at him. They were puzzled. Why had he come here? What did he want? What should they do? One of them suggested it would be best

to put the man straight back on his raft and send him away without delay. 'I am sure he wouldn't like it here, so far away from his own kind'.

But the fisherman knew the sea 'if we send him back, it will be the death of him and I don't want that on my conscience' he said; we have to take him in'...

The narration stops and I explain to the students that if they choose this story we will explore the life in this island, how the people treated the naked man and find out how the story ends.

2(4) Simultaneous clapping

The students in a circle are asked to focus on each other and keep eye contact so as to manage to clap simultaneously without being given a signal.

26/2/09

2(5) Introduction

In the circle students remember the story of *The Magic Pillows*. I again remind the students what we will be doing in the following workshops if they choose this story

We do the same with the story of *The Island*.

2 (6) Working with the third story *The Red Tree*

The students are asked to say five words that come in their mind. I write these words on the board and someone is asked to make up a story including those five words. We hear two of those stories. They are then divided into groups and they are provided with a set of pictures from the story *The Red Tree*. They are asked to do the same thing but with the pictures.

A representative from each group has to narrate the story his/her group thought that these pictures say to the rest of the class. When every group has presented their version of the story I explain to the students that if they choose this story we will be exploring who this girl is and what does the red tree signify for the girl. We will also try to make the soundtrack for those pictures and will explore whether the red tree signifies something for us.

2 (6) Decision and Vote

The students are asked to decide which story they liked the most. They are encouraged to find other friends that liked the same story with them. They discuss first in their groups about the story that interests them the most. Then in the circle they speak about their interest and the reason for their choice and try to convince others to choose the same story with them. Finally students vote by writing down in a paper their choice prioritizing which one they liked first, second and third.

3rd workshop (3/3/09-5/3/09)

Development of drama 1

3/3/09

3(1) Introduction:

In the circle I announce to the students that most of them have chosen to work with *The Magic Pillows*. Short discussion

3(2) Mirrors Exercise:

The students in pairs are asked to name themselves as A and B. A puts his/her hand at a very close distance to B's face without touching him/her. B must follow A's hand without complains and the opposite.

In the discussion that follows students are asked to report on how they feel when they lead/are leading and the relationship that this exercise might have with the story of *The Magic Pillows*.

3 (3) Improvisations

I read to the students some of the cruel laws that the king has established. (These are the laws that they themselves have written during the previous session). They are then asked in groups of four to present two scenes. The first one should depict 'The breaking of the law and the punishment that followed' and the second 'The reaction of the citizens'.

3(4) Narration in the circle:

'Dissatisfaction grew between the citizens. Arpatilaus didn't know how to handle it. He had established almost another 50 laws that defined how everyone must love him but this didn't make things any better...

He decided to call to a meeting his adjutant, the chief of the palace's guard and the palace's chief magician to decide how to handle it. During this meeting the palace's chief magician who was the most wicked suggested to give to the citizens nightmarish pillows 'So, their everyday life will be like a paradise compared to the nightmares that will harrow them at nights...'. "

3(4) Teacher in the role of the chief of the palace's guard:

The teacher of the classroom in role as the chief of the palace's guard walks between the citizens and announces:

'Hear, hear'

First: 'All the pillows of the city will be distressed'

Second: 'New anatomical pillows will be distributed to the citizens totally for free. This shows the kindness and concern of our king to his people'

Third: 'Sweet dreams!!!'

5/3/09

3(5) Introduction:

In the circle the students report on something they remember or liked from the previous time.

3(6) Game: Baltazar says:

Players are asked to follow the instructions only when Baltazar orders them to and not the teacher. They are given very complex orders.

3(7) Still images:

In groups of three the students are asked to present still images showing how was the citizens' everyday life after those horrible nights. Each group discusses and gives feedback on the work of another group.

3(8) Improvisation: 'Ceremony for declaring Arpatilaus as 'Best King of the Year'.

A volunteer takes the role of the king and two other the role of two guards.

Along the length of the room, the rest of the students as citizens are asked to form two rows one facing the other. Along each row a guard walks with a stick, making sure everything wends as programmed. The task for the students is to cheer and clap while the king passes through the two rows but when they feel my hand touching on their shoulders they should be speaking their inner thoughts loudly.

3(9) Improvisation: 'In the citizens' imagination...'

Four volunteers as the king, the king's adjutant, the chief of the palace's guard and the palace's chief magician sit in a small circle with their backs touching. The rest of the class in role as citizens, form a larger circle around the small circle. The task is for them to walk slowly but aggressively towards the four people and say to them what they think about them at the beginning in a whisper and then louder and louder as they approach them. The no-touching rule applies.

3(10) Teacher in role of X.:

After the ceremony the students in role as citizens discuss between them about the nightmares they are having. In role as X. I walk between the citizens and I put some short notes in their pockets secretly asking them for a meeting at the old mine at midnight.

(The students are encouraged in their free time at home to draw the king Arpatilaus as they imagine he is any way they want or even describe him with words).

3(11) Simultaneous clapping

The students in a circle are asked to focus on each other and keep eye contact so as to manage to clap simultaneously without being given a signal.

4th workshop (10/3/09-12/3/09)

Development of drama 2

10/3/09

4(1) Introduction:

In the circle we remember what we did the previous time.

4(2) Game: The Blind Cars

In pairs students name themselves as A and B. A must stand with his/her eyes closed. He/she a car and his/her back is a remote control that B, a driver will drive through the remote control that is by touching the other student's back. The students are then asked to reflect on this game and the relationship that this game might have with our story

4(3) Meeting in role: Teacher in Role of X.

Citizens meet X. (myself in role of X.). X. is a citizen who lives behind the palace. He has observed weird things happening in the palace and he believes that these are connected to the nightmares they are having. He tells them about the palace's magician and the small green book that he keeps with him at all times except at nights when a guard keeps it. He urges them to

find a way to take the green book because he believes in there lies an explanation about everything that is happening.

4(4) Game: The keeper of the book

A volunteer takes the role of the guard. He/she sits in a chair in the middle of the circle and a green book is placed under the chair. His/Her eyes are tied with a cloth. Other students try to steal the book. The guard must prevent them. This is played two or three times.

4(5) Hot seating:

The students in role as citizens are going to meet the person who guards the green book at nights. He is an assistant magician. They are free to ask him whatever they want.

4(6) Group improvisations 'The dreams'

In groups of four, the students will present improvisations showing how the life of the citizens was after the nightmares stopped. The improvisations are presented and improvised in the circle.

12/3/09

4(7) Introduction:

Students that have made drawings of the king are given time to present them in the circle.

4(8) Game: Funny pictures (the specific version of this game known also as Statues is chosen by the students).

A person starts out as a photographer standing at one side of the room. Everyone else playing stands at the other side of the room. The object of the game is for the rest of the players to race across and tag the photographer when he/she turns his/her back to them and thereby become the photographer. Whenever the photographer turns around, the players must freeze in a very funny way (just like in a photo) and hold that for as long as the photographer looks at them. The photographer can even walk around the players, trying to make them laugh. However, the photographer needs to be careful - whenever his/her back is turned, the other players are free to move. If a person is caught moving, they are sent back to the starting line to begin again.

4(9) Narration in the circle:

'During their meeting with the magician/guard the citizens made with his help pillows that caused sweet dreams. In the recipe they have used sweets, presents, photos from their beloved, photos from happy moments, toys, feathers from a dove, seaweed from the Sea of Joy...

Even though the nightmares stopped, their lives hadn't changed a lot. The laws were still in force making their everyday life really difficult. They had to decide what to do... Should they react putting their life in danger or not?'

4(10) Voices in the head

Students are asked to find a pair of the same height and weight. They name themselves A and B. A represents the voice of grit and B represents the voice of fear in the head of the citizen. By standing opposite the other and holding hands the students show the conflict that happens in the mind of each citizen on how to react by speaking words of grit and fear respectively.

4(11) The decision: Defining space (From Neelands and Goode, 1990, p.13)

The students as citizens are asked to take place in the space to denote their decision on what course of action they have decided to take about the king's laws. We imagine a diagonal line in the space available. The one end of the line represents the palace and the other end of the line represents the citizens' houses. The participants have to show physically their choice either to resist and overthrow the king by standing close to the palace, to take no action by standing close to their houses or denote that they had not yet decided what to do by standing somewhere in the middle.

4(12) Narration in the circle:

‘The citizens decided to gather all the nightmarish pillows and make with them a huge mattress and give it to the king as a present for his love and generosity. The same night Arpatilaus would sleep on that mattress. At a moment during the night the guards heard cries and screamings and ran to see what was happening. They saw Arpatilaus weighed down by the mattress. The guards took their swords and torn the mattress. What happened then is difficult to describe with words...The nightmares that have been multiplied all this time in the mattress have gone out...’

4(13) Simultaneous clapping

The students in a circle are asked to focus on each other and keep eye contact so as to manage to clap simultaneously without being given a signal.

5th workshop (17/3/09-19/3/09)

Reflections on the whole

17/3/09

5(1) Their preferred game:

We play the game that they liked the most during the time we have been working together (this was the bear and the woodcutter game played during the second workshop).

5(2) Short writings: The new laws

The students are given paper and pencil and they are asked to write down a new law with which the city would be ruled from now on.

5(3) Imagining in the circle:

Students as citizens in the circle report on what they heard that was the end of Arpatilaus and his people

5(4) Videotaping scenes and commentary:

In groups of four the students are encouraged to decide on their favorite scene from the story. Three of them will be the actors and one of them will be the director. The actors play the scene while videotaped by the director and then each member comments on camera why he/she likes that moment in the story. (A few moments are used in the beginning for a quick demonstration on the use of the camera).

19/3/09

5(5) Ball game

The players stand in a circle and throw the ball to each other. Every time the ball changes hands we count. The aim is not to miss the ball and reach number 50 in counting.

5(6) Ball game and narration

The students play the same game but every time they get to hold the ball they have to narrate something they remember from the story

5(7) Making the picture book of the story

The students report on the important moments and all the necessary information that the picture book of the story has to include so as when one reads the picture book does not need to read any words. These are written down in a large paper. Each student chooses one of these moments. It is important that all the moments are covered.

5(8) Simultaneous clapping

The students in a circle are asked to focus on each other and keep eye contact so as to manage to clap simultaneously without been given a signal.

(I have followed the same drama scheme with the participants of the Capital group with small alterations in some games. The first workshop was excluded)

(The drama scheme developed for *The Magic Pillows* is influenced by the drama scheme offered for this story in the book Avdi, A. and Chatzigeorgiou, M. (2007) *The art of drama in education*, Athens: Metechmio)

Appendix 2

Provincial School

1st Workshop (16/2/09)

Games and Improvisations to strengthen the group cohesiveness introduce them to the language we will be using

1(1) Introduction

Meeting in the circle- I introduce myself and explain to the students once again what we will be doing during the next workshops.

1(2) Game: Zip Zap Boing

Players stand in a circle. A person sends an imaginative force to another person. The person who receives the force has three choices; to pass it to a person that stands next to him/her by calling zip, to pass it to anyone other than those standing next to him/her by calling zap or to send the force back to the sender by calling boing. The aim is to be highly concentrated and go fast.

1(3) Ball Game

The players stand in a circle and throw the ball to each other. Every time a player throws the ball to another player, he/she must not forget to call the

name of the person to whom he/she is throwing the ball at. The aim is not to miss the ball or to forget to call the name.

1(4) Game: The ship and the buoys

The players as buoys arrange themselves in the space. A volunteer becomes the ship that is lost in the sea. The buoys will help the ship find its way to the port by making sounds. Those standing close to the port make loud sounds. On the contrary those that are far away make weaker sounds. The game is played three times.

1(5) Following instructions

The students are asked to do what they are commanded. Some examples are:

- Walk in the space (slowly, quickly, backwards)
- Jump
- Run in slow motion
- Find a person, stop and shake hands
- Walk, Walk and hug in two (leading to the next exercise)

1(6) Narrating an incident in an imaginative language

Students in two name themselves as A and B. A is supposed to narrate to B an incident that happened to him/her in an imaginative language and the

opposite. AT the end we share our thoughts with the rest of the group. We come to discuss how we communicate by using our bodies, our facial expressions, sounds, movements and how these function as signs.

1(7) Re-presenting known paintings with our bodies

Some known paintings are shown to the students. Students are asked to observe them carefully. A volunteer then moves in the middle of the circle and imitates something from one of the paintings. Another volunteer helps complement the specific painting. The aim is to represent in a still image the paintings (the students become familiar with the still image)

1(8) Bringing the painting to life

The paintings are again shown to the students. The students then in groups are asked to create a story out of the painting and present it to the rest of the class

1(9) Simultaneous clapping

The students in a circle are asked to focus on each other and keep eye contact so as to manage to clap simultaneously without been given a signal.

2nd Workshop (23/2/09)

Choice of the material to work with

(This workshop follows the same procedure with the 2nd workshop of the provincial school but the activities happen in a different order)

2(1) Introduction

In a circle we remember what we have done the previous time. I explain to the students that I will be giving them three stories and they will have to choose which one they like the most and prefer to work with during the next meetings.

2 (2) Working with the first story *The Red Tree*

The students are asked to say five words that come in their mind. I write these words on the board and someone is asked to make up a story including those five words. We hear two of those stories. They are then divided into groups and they are provided with a set of pictures from the story *The Red Tree*. They are asked to do the same thing but with the pictures. A representative from each group has to narrate the story his/her group thought that these pictures say to the rest of the class. When every group has presented their version of the story I explain to the students that if they choose this story we will be exploring who this girl is and what does the red tree signify for the girl. We will also try to make the soundtrack for those pictures and will explore whether the red tree signifies something for us.

2(3) Working with the second story *The Magic Pillows*

Game: The bear and the woodcutters.

A volunteer takes the role of the bear and the rest of the class become the woodcutters. The woodcutters are on the way to their house after a long day in the woods. At a moment they meet a bear who is hungry and dangerous. The task is for everyone to all lie down and stay motionless. The bear can do anything she wants with them. Whoever moves is eaten by the bear and he/she then becomes a bear as well.

We then sit in the circle and then I narrate something from the story

Narration in the circle:

'Once upon a time in a far- away city with no sky, a hateful ruler, Arpatilaus The First, ruled. This ruler had twelve crowns. Every month he wore another crown. He also had a golden telescope and a feather from a raven. I will first tell you what he did with the telescope and then I will tell you what he did with the feather of the raven. He took the golden telescope, he went up to the highest tower of the palace that had twelve windows and from there he watched closely all the territory. If he saw anything that he liked, he called his guards that ran with their motorcycles, grabbed it, put it in a golden bag and took it to him. Now that I have told you what he did with the golden telescope I will tell you what he did with the feather of the raven. With the feather he wrote rules. Not usual laws though. He wrote awful and cruel laws...'

The narration stops and the students are given paper and pencil to write down one of the laws they believe Arpatilaus wrote which we read out loud in the circle.

Narration in the circle:

‘But it weren’t only these laws. Arpatilaus has written so many laws that the poor citizens sometimes forgot some of them. It is not weird then that the citizens disliked the king. Arpatilaus then decided to give to the citizens new pillows to wheedle them because they were so displeased with him. But these weren’t ordinary pillows.... They caused nightmares...’

The narration stops at that moment and I explain to the students that if they choose this story we will explore what the citizens’ lives were like when they were ruled by Arpatilaus, we will see the moments they started having nightmares, the way they send away the hateful king and the way they then ruled their city.

2(4) Working with the third story *The Island*

Game: Fruit salad (from Winston and Tandy, 2001, p. 2-3)

6. Chairs are placed in a circle, with one chair in the middle. There must be no spare chairs.

7. Children sit on the chairs and the teacher goes around the circle naming each child in turn apple, orange pear; apple, orange, pear etc.
8. The child (or teacher) in the central chair begins the game by calling out either apple, orange, pear or fruit salad. If she calls out apple, all those children named apple must leave their chair and find a different one. She may also call out apples and pears, oranges and pears, etc. At the words fruit salad, all children must swap chairs.
9. The aim of the game is for whoever is in the centre to enter the circle and to be replaced by the player who fails to find a chair, whereupon the game starts again.
10. None of the players is allowed either to move into a chair directly next to them or back into the chair they have just vacated.

Then we repeat a variation of it in role: you are here to rescue all but one of the players from a zone of war, disease and / or famine. This time there is a hidden time limit to the game, revealed only at its end. Whoever is in the middle when the game ends is to be abandoned to their own devices.

We sit again in the circle and I show to the students the following picture



Picture of the raft and the sea

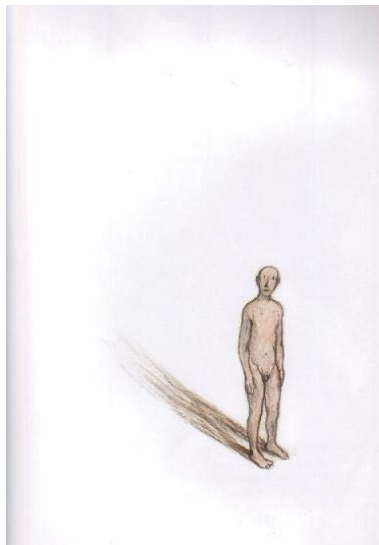
Discussion in the circle:

The students share their thoughts about what do they think this story is about.

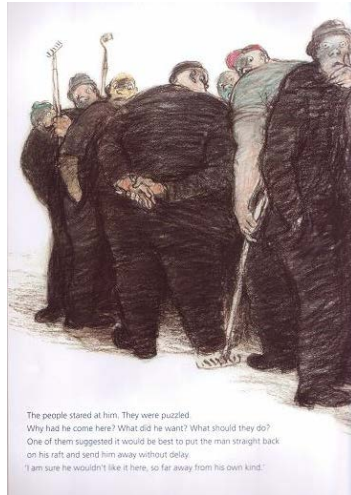
Narration in the circle:

‘One morning, the people of the island found a man on the beach, where fate and ocean currents had washed his raft ashore. When he saw them coming he stood up...He wasn’t like them...’

I show them the pictures:



The man



The people of the island

Short scenes:

The students are asked to present short scenes to show the way the people of the island reacted when they saw the man.

Narration in the circle:

‘The people stared at him. They were puzzled. Why had he come here? What did he want? What should they do? One of them suggested it would be best to put the man straight back on his raft and send him away without delay. ‘I am sure he wouldn’t like it here, so far away from his own kind’.

But the fisherman knew the sea ‘if we send him back, it will be the death of him and I don’t want that on my conscience’ he said; We have to take him in’...

The narration stops and I explain to the students that if they choose this story we will explore the life in this island, how the people treated the naked man and find out how the story ends.

2 (5) Decision and Vote

The students are asked to decide which story they liked the most. They are encouraged to find other friends that liked the same story with them. They discuss first in their groups about the story that interests them the most. Then in the circle they speak about their interest and the reason for their choice and try to convince others to choose the same story with them. Finally students vote by writing down on a paper their choice prioritizing which one they liked first, second and third.

3rd Workshop (2/3/09)

Development of drama 1

3 (1) Game: Fruit salad (from Winston and Tandy, 2001, p. 2-3) (The game is played again so as to introduce the students to the atmosphere of the story)

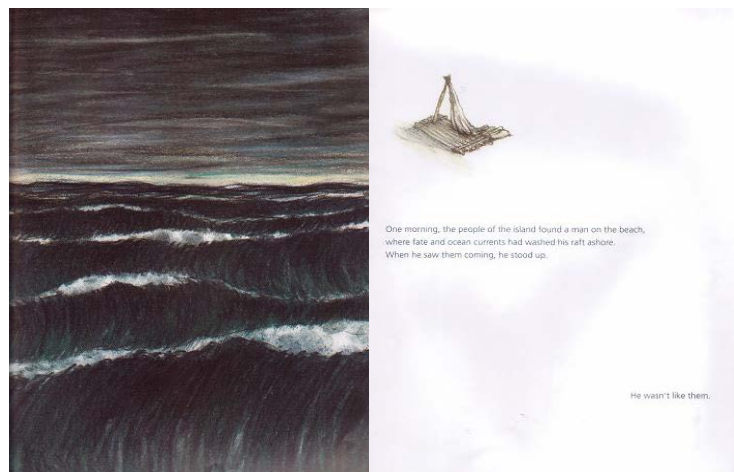
1. Chairs are placed in a circle, with one chair in the middle. There must be no spare chairs.
2. Children sit on the chairs and the teacher goes around the circle naming each child in turn apple, orange pear; apple, orange, pear etc.

3. The child (or teacher) in the central chair begins the game by calling out either apple, orange, pear or fruit salad. If she calls out apple, all those children named apple must leave their chair and find a different one. She may also call out apples and pears, oranges and pears, etc. At the words fruit salad, all children must swap chairs.
4. The aim of the game is for whoever is in the centre to enter the circle and to be replaced by the player who fails to find a chair, whereupon the game starts again.
5. None of the players is allowed either to move into a chair directly next to them or back into the chair they have just vacated.

Then we repeat a variation of it in role: you are here to rescue all but one of the players from a zone of war, disease and / or famine. This time there is a hidden time limit to the game, revealed only at its end. Whoever is in the middle when the game ends is to be abandoned to their own devices.

3 (2) Narration:

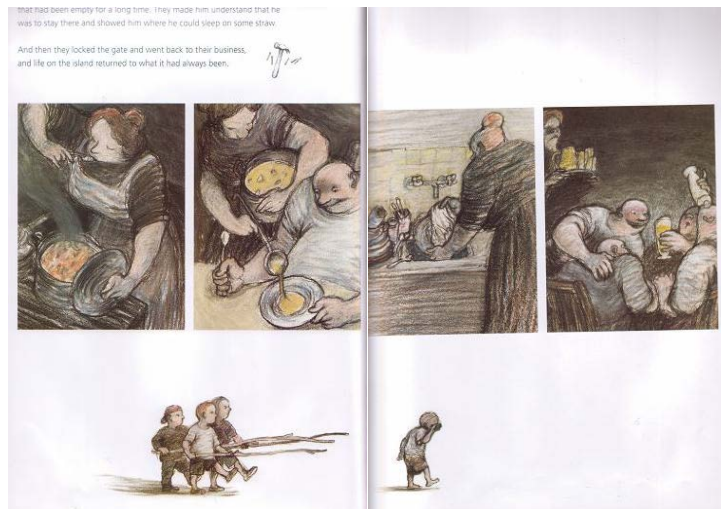
(I show to the students the picture of the raft and the sea)



'There is an island somewhere across these waves, inhabited. They are a people of whom we know little but we know they are prosperous and well fed. Perhaps they will help just one fellow human being, a refugee in dire need'.

3(3) Improvisation: The Sea of Hopes and Fears

The class is divided into two groups and a black cloth is placed between them. The students sway together in the motion of the waves and make sounds to represent the bleak desolation of the journey. I then show them a selection of pictures from *The Island*. They show a people who are indeed well fed: women cooking and serving food, men drinking in taverns, boys playing the kind of games boys like. These images suggest hopes in the mind of the refugee but also fears concerning how they will be received if and when they land on the island. Players are to whisper hopeful or fearful words (depending upon their group) over the sounds of the wind and sea as immediate responses to what they see. They are encouraged to echo any words or phrases that resonate with their feelings. After the exercise, players comment on what provoked their responses.



3(4) Still Images: The islanders' reaction after seeing the refugee

The students are asked to show the image of the islanders and their immediate responses on seeing the refugee for the first time. Players walk in space and on freeze, take the form / shape / facial expression of any of these figures, gathering spontaneously in groups. I ask for sentences they can imagine any of these islanders saying – a kind of thought tracking exercise.

3(5) Meeting in role (Teacher in role of the mayor)

The students take the role of islanders and I take the role of mayor. We sit down in the circle and begin a meeting in role. I have approached the intruder and called the islanders in a meeting so as to discuss and find a solution to the problem we are facing (I try to make the decision difficult. No decision need be reached during this meeting).

3(6) Tableaux

I ask the students to consider the alternative choices now open to the islanders. In groups of four or five, they are asked to make quick tableaux to illustrate what their group thinks the decision will be. There can be words / some movement to accompany these. We then discuss why the islanders have made these decisions.

3 (7) Completing a scene visually

Whatever the decision of the islanders, the refugee appears in town (the only decision being ruled out, then, is murder). I show to the students the picture with the reaction of the female islander. We sculpt a player into this position and suggest ways in which the scene can be visually completed. We discuss on what is that frightens her, whether her fear is fair and rational and we compare her image with that of the refugee that we have created.



3(8) Improvisations

Students in small groups improvise four different scenes, each in response to a different image.

- The teacher's monologue to the children in class;
- The teacher's very different talk with the villagers in the tavern;
- The animated discussion among the men who found the refugee;
- The husband and wife reading the article in the paper.

4th Workshop 16/3/09

Development of the Drama 2

4 (1) Introduction

In the circle we share with the rest of the group something we remember or something we liked from the previous lesson

4 (2) Improvisations

The students are asked to re-present in groups the scenes that they created the previous time (the teacher's monologue to the children in class, the teacher's very different talk with the villagers in the tavern; the animated discussion among the men who found the refugee; the husband and wife

reading the article in the paper) but this time the scenes will be videotaped. These will be played out and then refined into very short scenes, about ten – twenty seconds long. They will be presented in the form of a montage, switching from one scene to another at my signal, being resumed when spotlight brought back. The class will then discuss what is happening to the islanders and why. The students suggest an image for the refugee while all this is happening.

4 (3) Sculpture's exercise

A volunteer takes the role of a sculpture and the rest of the group as sculptors, sculpt the body of the volunteer so as to show how the stranger feels.

4(4) Narration and discussion

I narrate the whole story showing in parallel the pictures of the story. A discussion follows based on the following questions:

- What did you think of the story?
- Did you expect this ending?
- What did the islanders do? Why?

4 (5) Writers

We take the role of writers and we give our own ending of the story.

4 (6) Collective drawing

The participants are asked to name the most important moments of the story.

These are written down. I provide the students with a large piece of paper and pastels and ask them to choose the one that they like and draw it on the paper. Each one has to choose a different one though so as all the important moments of the story should be drawn.

5th Workshop 23/3/09

Reflections

(the workshop had to end earlier than usual)

5(1) Ball game

The players stand in a circle and throw the ball to each other. Every time the ball changes hands we count. The aim is not to miss the ball and reach number 50 in counting.

5(2) Ball game and narration

The students play the same game but every time they get to hold the ball they have to narrate something they remember from the story

5 (3) Role on the floor

The participants are presented with two large papers where a big figure (representing the islanders) and a smaller figure (representing the stranger) are depicted. They are asked to write a word or phrase to present their thoughts and feelings

5(4) Their preferred game

The students are given the chance to choose the game that they liked the most during the previous workshops to play it (this is the zip zap boing game played during the first workshop)

5 (5) Collective drawing

The students work again to finish the collective drawing as they hadn't finished it the last time.

(I have followed the same drama scheme with the participants of the City group with small alternations in some games. The first workshop was not included)

(The drama scheme of the story of *The Island* was developed with the guidance of my supervisor Professor Joe Winston)

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